

BOATING SEASON ON THE HORIZON: WHAT DO MARINA OWNERS AND OPERATORS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WORKPLACE SAFETY?

Insights
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More than ever before, marina owners and operators need to ensure their workplace safety practices are up to date. It's no secret that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) frequently inspects marinas and boatyards for safety violations, and now OSHA is especially cracking down on heat-safety violations. What do you need to know to stay ahead of the curve? We'll give you five safety areas to focus on as you prepare for boating season.

1. Heat Safety

Heat safety is a critical consideration because employees may be exposed to high temperatures for extended periods of time. Here are a few ways you can look out for your employees:

- **Provide Access to Drinking Water.** You should provide ample access to potable water throughout the marina, and employees should be encouraged to drink water frequently.
- **Set Up Shaded Areas and Fans.** You can get creative by designing shaded areas where employees and customers can avoid the sun. Opportunities include shaded seating areas, large umbrellas, and awnings. You can also install fans or misting stations to circulate air and reduce heat buildup.
- **Encourage Cooler Clothing.** Employees should be encouraged to wear lightweight and breathable clothing

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that covers exposed skin, and they should be provided sunscreen throughout the day.

- **Be Mindful When Scheduling.** You should analyze whether physically demanding tasks can be completed during cooler times of the day to minimize exposure to peak temperatures.

Training and awareness for signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, should be conducted during onboarding. Managers should also be flexible and supportive of employees who may need additional accommodations due to heat-related issues. For example, managers could allow those employees more frequent breaks or provide temporary relief from strenuous tasks.

2. Eyewash Stations

An eyewash and/or safety shower is required when an employee's eyes or body could be exposed to injurious corrosive materials. You should assess your need to provide an eyewash or safety shower and whether it meets recommended guidance. The OSHA standard does not provide a clear definition of the size, type, or location of eye wash stations. But guidance from the American National Standards Institute provides five key metrics:

- **Maximum travel distance** to an eye wash station is 10 seconds or approximately 50 feet.
- Water must have a **flow rate** of at least 0.4 gallons per minute (GPM) and a **minimum pressure** of 30 pounds per square inch (psi) for a full 15 minutes.
- Hands-free stay-open **valves** should activate in one second or less.
- The **heads** of the units (water flow pattern) must be positioned 33 inches to 53 inches from the surface on which the user stands and six inches minimum from the wall.
- **Eyewash fluid** must irrigate and flush both eyes simultaneously.

Under this standard, a bottle of eye wash solution, while appropriate as a first response, should not be the only eye wash option at a facility. Notably, most facilities are required

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to have multiple eye wash stations due to the distance limitations.

3. Fire Extinguishers

Multiple regulatory standards – for example, from OSHA and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – dictate the proper use, size, and location of fire extinguishers. For example, under NFPA regulations (which some states have adopted as the fire code and others consider a best practice):

- The maximum travel distance to an extinguisher is **75 feet**.
- An 80B:C type fire extinguisher to be located within **100 feet** of a fuel pump.

Other states use alternative codes and you should be mindful of this if you operate marinas in multiple states. Check with your local fire department to learn which code you must follow.

4. First Aid Kits

Best practices for first aid kits vary depending on the location of the marina and the proximity to medical care. The OSHA standard requires a person on site to be trained to deliver first aid, but a gap in the standard creates some gray areas. As a best practice, if there is not medical treatment within eight to 10 minutes of your marina, then you should have several staff members trained in first aid.

As boating season approaches, now is a great time to take an inventory of your first aid supplies and conduct first aid training. You should also review your supplies to ensure they have not expired.

5. Employee Training

All employees – including seasonal employees – should be trained on the location and proper use of safety equipment. The equipment should be properly marked with signage to identify the location. Managers should also be trained regarding the OSHA inspection process including pre-inspection, the opening conference, and walkaround inspections.

Conclusion

By implementing these heat safety measures, marina owners can help protect the health and well-being of employees, ensuring a safer and more comfortable environment for employees and customers. We will continue to monitor this area of the law and provide updates as warranted. Make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to get the most up-to-date information on workplace safety issues. If you have any questions, contact the authors of this Insight, your Fisher Phillips attorney, or any member of our [Workplace Safety Practice Group](#).