

Public Citizen Formally Petitions OSHA To Develop Regulation on Heat Stress

News

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Ed Foulke, co-chair of the Workplace Safety & Catastrophe Management Practice Group and former Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA, was quoted in the September 6 article "Public Citizen Formally Petitions OSHA To Develop Regulation on Heat Stress" in *BNA Occupational Safety & Health Reporter*. Public Citizen, a citizen advocacy organization, petitioned the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to develop a standard to protect workers, both indoors and outdoors, from heat-related deaths and injury. The standard would require employers to take "specific engineering and work practice controls" to keep workers' core temperatures below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, gradually introduce workers to high heat, and provide water, rest, and shade. OSHA currently has a nationwide outreach campaign in place to educate workers and employers about outdoor heat hazards. Proponents of the petition argue that only the implementation of a specific, enforceable standard will be effective in saving lives and avoiding heat related injuries. Ed noted that the Public Citizen's request "raises a lot of questions," including whether or not its cost would make it a significant regulatory action, how costly engineering controls might be for industry, and what employers might be required to do beyond engineering controls. "For an emergency standard to cover all this stuff and put it into a standard would be difficult."

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