

U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Kansas City Area Office
2300 Main St., Suite 168
Kansas City, Missouri 64108



September 22, 2016

National Association of Letter Carriers
ATTN: Director of Safety and Health
100 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed you will find a hazard alert letter for Inspection 1170978, for violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. If you have any questions about the enclosed hazard alert letter, I would welcome any further discussion.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 affords workers the right to a safe workplace. OSHA requires employers to provide a workplace that is free of serious recognized hazards and in compliance with OSHA standards. Workers have the right to file a complaint with OSHA if they believe that there are either violations of OSHA standards or serious workplace hazards. Contact the OSHA Area Office nearest you, or contact our toll free number, 1-800-321-OSHA(6742) or TTY 1-877-889-5627. To file a complaint online or obtain information on your rights in the workplace, visit OSHA's website at www.osha.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karena Lorek".

KL Karena Lorek
Acting Area Director

Enclosure

U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Kansas City Area Office
2300 Main St., Suite 168
Kansas City, Missouri 64108
816-483-9531; 816-483-9724(fax)
Reply to the Attention of: Area Director



August 19, 2016

USPS Jefferson City
1750 Jefferson Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear USPS,

As a result of (a formal employee complaint on heat related issues) at 1750 Jefferson Street in Jefferson City, MO an inspection was initiated. An inspection of working conditions at the establishment was conducted on August 17, to evaluate hazards that could be associated with the development of employee heat-related illnesses.

Employees are engaged in delivering mail operations at temperatures that, depending on the season of the year, time of the day, and other climatological information could be considered hazardous. Employees are performing such operations from as early as 6:30am to approximately 5:30pm.

Our investigation determined that although employees can be exposed to excessive heat in their work environment the employer has not taken the necessary steps to address the hazard. The following are recommended elements of a comprehensive heat illness prevention program:

General Controls

General Controls include training, personal protective equipment (PPE), administrative controls and hygiene practices, health screening and heat alert programs.

1. **Training:** workers must be informed of the following:
 - a. Hazards of the heat stress
 - b. Responsibility to avoid heat stress
 - c. Recognition of danger signs and symptoms
 - d. First-aid procedures
 - e. Employer's program to address heat related illnesses
 - f. The effects of certain medication, drugs and alcohol in hot environments
2. **Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment**
 - a. Cooling vest, wetted clothing and water cooled/dampened garments are effective under high temperature and low humidity conditions.

3. Administrative Controls

- a. Permit employees to take intermittent rest breaks with water breaks, use relief workers and reduce physical demands on the job
- b. Have air-conditioned or shaded areas available for those break/rest periods.
- c. Provide cool water and encouraging employees to drink 5 to 7 ounces of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes – rather than relying on thirst.

4. Health Screening and Acclimatization:

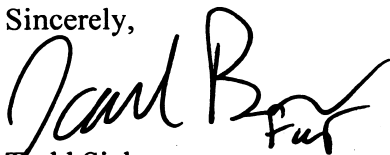
- a. Workers should be allowed to get used to hot working environments by using a staggered approach over several days. The same should be done for workers returning from an absence of two weeks or more, For example begin work with 50% of the normal workload and time spent in the hot environment, and then gradually increase the time over a 5 day-period.
- b. Workers should be made aware of the following:
 1. Medications such as the following can increase risk of heat stress:
 - Diuretics- water pills
 - Antihypertensives-blood pressure medication
 - Anticholinergics- for treatment of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
 - Antihistamines – allergy medications
 - A doctor or pharmacist should be contacted for more information
 2. Dangers of using drugs and alcohol in hot work environments

In the interest of workplace safety and health, I recommend you voluntarily take steps to reduce or eliminate your workers exposure to the hazards associated with working in a hot environment. Please review the above elements of a comprehensive heat illness prevention program and implement in the workplace to protect workers. I am sure that your company shares our goal of reducing or eliminating exposures to heat illness in your workplace. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Further information on preventing heat related illness can be found at www.osha.gov/heat.

Attached is a list of available resources that may be of assistance to you in preventing work-related injuries and illnesses in your workplace. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Kansas City Area Office.

Sincerely,



Todd Sieleman
Acting Area Director

Attachment

HEAT RELATED INFORMATION LINKS

1. Safety and Health Topics: Heat Stress:
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/index.html>.
2. OSHA Technical Manual, Section III. Health Hazards, Chapter 4, Heat Stress:
https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta.otm/otm_iii_4.html.
3. NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topics:
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>.
4. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Weather Service:
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om.heat/index.shtml#heatindex>.
5. Current weather conditions, including the previous three day weather conditions at www.noaa.gov, information from prior dates can also be requested.
6. NIOSH Publication 86-112: Working in Hot Environments: <http://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/docs/86-112/>.
7. California OSHA Health Illness Prevention: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh.heatillnessinfo.html>.