

**PMP** Pest Management PROFESSIONAL » **Direct to You**



## INSURANCE MANAGEMENT

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### Preventing Heat-Related Incidents in the Pest Control Industry

By John Culotta

Pest management professionals (PMPs) face a multitude of unique risks while working in the field. Hazardous pesticides, slip-and-fall risks and dangerous heat exposure pose significant threats to the pest control industry's daily operations. Workers' compensation insurance can help, but a claim from an injury on the job can be financially damaging. An injured employee could be out of work for weeks, or even months.

According to the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), there were a reported 2,410 heat-related illnesses or injuries and 43 heat-related deaths in the workforce in 2021. Because heat-related injuries and illnesses are wildly [underreported](#), it is difficult to tell exactly how impactful heat is, making heat-related incidents unpredictable and dangerous. However, there are steps employers can take to protect their businesses and foster a safe work environment for staff.

#### Preventing heat-related Incidents

Summer is right around the corner, and this season the weather is [expected](#) to be hot and dry. Employees may not recognize when they are in danger of heat stroke, heat stress or other conditions. To



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combat potentially heat-related risks, employers should:

- **Be Proactive:** Small actions such as placing water stations throughout work sites, implementing regular vehicle air-conditioning system checks and prioritizing breaks with shade access can take a huge burden off pest control professionals. Implementing the buddy system by sending two employees to each job site helps employees monitor each other and provide aid if needed. Employers can also check-in on workers in the field throughout the day to monitor any symptoms of heat-related illness, assess conditions and send help as necessary.
- **Train Employees:** Have heat safety protocols in place with regular training. Review that training and ensure the entire organization is up to date. Training can include teaching employees to be aware of warning signs and what to do if a colleague appears in distress. Advice on how to dress for extreme heat conditions can help as well. If employees understand the risks and are aware of the warning signs to watch for, they will feel safer and more supported going into the field.
- **Monitor Conditions:** Employers should regularly monitor outdoor conditions. Scheduling high-heat-risk jobs in the morning, rather than later when temperatures rise, can help. OSHA's [free heat safety phone application](#) provides the calculated heat index and risk level of a worksite, which can help with scheduling decisions as well. Monitoring also allows employers to inform PMPs when they will be working in a high heat condition so they can stay alert and take necessary precautions.



Employers should consider the [resources and tools](#) provided by OSHA and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) to assist with heat-related risk mitigation. Additionally, insurers can help evaluate more specific risks to a workplace by conducting a risk assessment of working conditions. With heat-related injuries on the rise, PMPs must take advantage of the available tools and information to protect their employees in the field.

### Expect the Unexpected

As the keystone of any business, employers must recognize the importance of protecting their staff and building a safe work environment. Unfortunately, accidents do happen. To effectively protect a pest control business, employers need insurance professionals who understand their unique needs. With [PCOPro Liability Insurance](#) from Brownyard Group, pest control operators can rest easy knowing the most up-to-date market information, and their specific risks, have been considered.



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