



**SAFETY**

Nebraska Building Chapter

## AGC Safety Initiative E-News

June 29, 2023

### **The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is now accepting charges of discrimination under the [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#).**

The new law, which went into effect June 27, guarantees expanded protections for workers experiencing pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions.

All employers with at least 15 employees are required to extend “reasonable accommodations” to pregnant workers. Those accommodations can include additional bathroom breaks, a water bottle at a workstation, having a chair or stool to sit on during work tasks, light duty, and assistance with manual labor.

Complainants can file charges with EEOC for incidents that occurred on or after June 27 via the agency’s [online reporting portal](#).

EEOC also has resources for workers and employers to familiarize themselves with the new law, which was included in the fiscal year 2023 federal appropriations bill signed into law by President Joe Biden on Dec. 29. The resources include:

- A [tip sheet](#) on how to request accommodations
- A “Know Your Rights” [video series](#)
- A [PWFA rights poster](#) (in English, Spanish and eight other languages)

[Learn more](#)

### **July 4th safety: How to prevent fireworks-related injuries, fires**

For the July 4th holiday, police and fire departments across the country are warning of the dangers of fireworks that injure thousands of people every year.

Officials say that on average, 180 people go to the emergency room every day with fireworks-related injuries in the weeks leading up to and after Independence Day, and more than 16,000 reported fires are started by fireworks annually. Additionally, roughly two-thirds of all annual fireworks injuries happen around July 4th. Most of the injuries are burns and are linked to familiar devices like sparklers.

[Learn more](#)

### **Heat Stress**

Workers who are exposed to extreme heat or work in hot environments may be at risk of heat stress. Exposure to extreme heat can result in occupational illnesses and injuries. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rashes. Heat can also increase the risk of injuries in workers as it may result in sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses, and dizziness. Burns may also occur as a result of accidental contact with hot surfaces or steam.

Workers at risk of heat stress include outdoor workers and workers in hot environments such as firefighters, bakery workers, farmers, construction workers, miners, boiler room workers, factory workers, and others. Workers at greater risk of heat stress include those who are 65 years of age or older, are overweight, have heart disease or high blood pressure, or take medications that may be affected by extreme heat.

Prevention of heat stress in workers is important. Employers should provide training to workers so they understand what heat stress is, how it affects their health and safety, and how it can be prevented.

[Learn more](#)

### **Air Quality Index**

Millions of people live in areas where air pollution can cause serious health problems. Local air quality can affect our daily lives. Like the weather, it can change from day to day. EPA developed the Air Quality Index, or AQI, to make information available about the health effects of the five most common air pollutants, and how to avoid those effects.

[Learn more](#)

### **Expect a hot, smoky summer in much of America Here's why you'd better get used to it**

The only break much of America can hope for anytime soon from eye-watering dangerous smoke from fire-struck Canada is brief bouts of shirt-soaking sweltering heat and humidity from a southern heat wave that has already proven deadly, forecasters say.

And then the smoke will likely come back to the Midwest and East.

That's because neither the 235 out-of-control Canadian wildfires nor the stuck weather pattern that's responsible for this mess of meteorological maladies are showing signs of relenting for the next week or longer, according to meteorologists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Prediction Center.

First, the stuck weather pattern made abnormally hot and dry conditions for Canada to burn at off-the-chart record levels. Then it created a setup where the only relief comes when low pressure systems roll through, which means areas on one side get smoky air from the north and the other gets sweltering air from the south.

[Read more](#)