

Decision of the Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs No. (17) of 2021 on the Necessary Precautions to Protect Workers from Heat Stress

The Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs,

After perusal of the Labour Law promulgated by Law No. (14) of 2004 and the amending laws thereof,

The Emiri Decree No. (29) of 1996 concerning the Council of Ministers' resolutions that are submitted to the Emir for ratification and issuance thereof,

The Decision of the Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing No. (16) of 2007 on Specifying the Working Hours in Open Workplaces during the Summer, and

Adoption by the Council of Ministers of the draft of this Decision in its 40th ordinary meeting of 2020 held on 21/10/2020,

Has decided the following:

Article (1)

In the application of the provisions of this Decision, the following expressions shall have the meanings assigned to each of them, unless the context requires another meaning:

Heat Stress: Failure of the human body to maintain its natural temperature as a result of exerting a physical effort when it is exposed, in the work environment, to high heat accompanied by humidity directly or far from sunlight in shaded or closed places, which leads to body disease due to defects in the functions responsible for temperature regulation, resulting in number of health problems.

Workplaces: Places where workers are required to be present or to go to by virtue of their work.

Open Workplaces: Workplaces where workers are exposed to climatic conditions such as heat, humidity and sunlight.

Shaded and Ventilated Workplaces: These include open workplaces equipped with an adequate and suitable system for artificial ventilation and where workers are not exposed to sunlight, and places where workers are not exposed to heat from equipment.

Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature Measurement System: A system for assessing the ambient temperature of the work environment that calculates the Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) on the basis of the relative combination of Dry Bulb temperature (DB), Globe Temperature (GT) and Wet Heat (WA) using the devices assigned to it.

Thermal Voltage Reading Indicator: The temperature of the Wet-Bulb Globe Device that the Ministry announces or that companies read on the site through approved (WBGT) devices.

Article (2)

Working hours shall be specified for work that is performed under the sun or in open workplaces and in places other than shaded and ventilated workplaces, during the period from (1) June to (15) September of each year, so that work shall not be done in the period from 10:00 a.m. to 03:30 p.m.

Article (3)

Each employer shall set a schedule specifying the daily working hours in accordance with the provisions of this Decision, and place this schedule in a visible place where all workers can easily view it and the labour inspectors can see it during their inspection visits.

Article (4)

The employer shall abide by the instructions and directives related to heat stress issued by the Ministry, and shall also abide by the following:

- 1- Developing a joint plan with workers to assess the risks of heat stress and mitigate its effects, and updating it periodically, provided that a copy of the assessment is kept at the workplace for inspection by labour inspectors.
- 2- Providing training for all workers to handle heat stress by May of each year.
- 3- Providing free drinking water to all employees at an appropriate degree of cold throughout the work period.
- 4- Providing shaded resting places that are easy for workers to access, and they shall be effective in providing protection from sunlight and high temperatures when resting.

- 5- Providing the workers with personal protective equipment suitable for hot weather, including light, loose-fitting clothing.
- 6- Conducting annual medical examinations to diagnose and manage chronic diseases that may contribute to the risk of heat stress at no cost to the worker while keeping records of those examinations.
- 7- Training the paramedics and supervisors of occupational safety and health in the workplace to provide guidance and first aid to the workers.
- 8- Adopting the measurement of the Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) provided that all climatic criteria such as sunlight, relative humidity, air temperature and wind speed are taken into account in this assessment, and taking the necessary measures in the event of high indicators.
- 9- Monitoring and recording levels of climatic conditions in the workplace and stopping the work in workplaces where the temperature index of the Wet-Bulb Globe device exceeds (32.1) degrees.

Article (5)

If more than one employer is present at one work site at the same time, the main contractor at the work site shall be obligated to follow up with them, to apply the measures set forth in the preceding Article.

Article (6)

The worker has the right to stop work and file a complaint with the Ministry if there is a valid reason that leads him to believe that heat stress threatens his safety or health, and in this case he shall inform the supervisors to study his case. In this case, the employer has no right to dismiss the worker, deprive him of his rights or expose him to discrimination.

Article (7)

By a decision of the Minister, the workplace, in which the provisions of this Decision are not considered, shall be partially or completely closed,

Article (8)

The provisions of this Decision shall not apply to the work performed by companies working in oil and gas projects.

Article (9)

The decision of the Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing No. (16) of 2007 referred to as well as every provision that contradicts the provisions of this Decision shall be repealed.

Article (10)

All competent authorities, each within its competence, shall implement this Decision. It shall come into force from the day following the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Yousef bin Mohammed Al Othman Fakhroo

Minister of Administrative Development,

Labour and Social Affairs

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