Brief Overview of the Cal/OSHA Proposed Emergency Regulation to Protect Workers From Wildfire Smoke

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Petition 573

• The California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board (Board) is the only agency in the State authorized to adopt occupational safety and health standards.

• Any person can address the Board and petition or propose a new or revised occupational safety or health standard.

• Petition 573 was submitted by worker advocate groups to amend Title 8 to protect outdoor workers from unhealthy levels of wildfire smoke through the emergency rulemaking process.
Petition 573 requests to amend Title 8 through the addition of Emergency Standards to protect outdoor workers from wildfire smoke constituents.
Overview of the Emergency Proposal

1. Scope
2. Identification of harmful exposures
3. Communication
4. Training and instruction
5. Control of harmful exposure to employees
This section applies to workplaces where:

(A) The current Air Quality Index (current AQI) for PM2.5 is greater than 150, regardless of the AQI for other pollutants; and

(B) The employer should reasonably anticipate that employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke.

(With some exceptions)
Identification of Harmful Exposure

1. Check the AQI on governmental websites; or

2. Get the AQI from a governmental agency by phone, email, text, etc.; or

3. Monitor air quality directly; or

4. Assume the AQI is greater than 500.
The employer shall establish and implement a system for communicating wildfire smoke hazards in a form readily understandable by all affected employees.

1. Inform employees of the current AQI for PM2.5 and of protective measures available to employees to reduce their wildfire smoke exposures.

2. Encourage employees to inform the employer of worsening of air quality; and any adverse symptoms that may be the result of wildfire smoke exposure such as asthma attacks, difficulty breathing, and chest pain.
The employer will be required to provide effective training and instruction. At a minimum the information contained in Appendix B.
Control of Harmful Exposure to Employees

- Engineering controls
- Administrative controls
- Control by respiratory protective equipment

Emergencies, including rescue and evacuation are exempt from the requirement to implement engineering and administrative controls.
Any Questions?