

Scorch Alert! States, UTs Asked to Protect Workers from Heat Waves

Labour min issues advisory on tweaking work hours; industry bodies urge cos to tackle heat stress

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New Delhi: The labour and employment ministry has issued an advisory to chief secretaries of states and union territories (UTs) to take proactive measures including rescheduling of work hours and assessing the urgency of physical work during peak heat hours to minimise the impact of heat wave on labourers and casual workers across the country.

In addition, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) have drawn up heat wave advisories for companies to protect workers from the detrimental effects of high temperatures in view of the weather office issuing forecasts of blistering heat waves this summer.

The government advisory, issued recently by labour and employment secretary Sujata Chaturvedi, said states need to put in place an effective implementation and monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance and effectiveness of these measures.

“Worst sufferers of extreme heat wave conditions are the workers and labourers of our country in various sectors and a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach needs to be adopted to protect these workers from the adverse

Burning Point

States asked to ensure rescheduling of work hours | To assess urgency of physical work during peak heat hours

IN 2024, INDIA WITNESSED
48,156 suspected heat stroke cases

HEAT STROKE DEATHS
269 suspected | 161 confirmed

75% of India's workforce is exposed to heat

FACTORIES, MINES ASKED TO ALLOW FLEXIBILITY IN WORK TIMINGS

Govt advisory calls for special attention to construction workers, brick kiln workers, daily wagers

effects of heatwave,” said the advisory, a copy of which was seen by ET. “I would like to urge you to take proactive measures and issue necessary instructions to employers, industries and construction companies to immediately undertake necessary steps in this direction.”

The Centre has also asked the management of factories and mines to allow flexibility to workers to slow down, negotiate work schedules and reschedule rest timings to avoid work during high or extremely hot temperatures.

It said special attention needs to be given to construction workers, brick kiln workers, daily wagers and casual workers to disseminate information

Factories and mines asked to allow flexibility to slow down, negotiate work schedules and reschedule rest timings to avoid work during extreme heat

stroke deaths.

“Nearly 75% of India’s workforce is exposed to heat,” said Sachit Jain, chairman, CII National Committee on Industrial Relations & Labour, and vice chairman and managing director,

regarding ways to mitigate the impact of heat waves.

According to the National Centre for Disease Control, in 2024, India witnessed 48,156 suspected heat stroke cases, 269 suspected heat stroke deaths and 161 confirmed heat

Vardhman Special Steels, adding that as temperatures rise, the country faces the risk of losing up to 34 million potential work days annually. This can lead to significant dips in productivity across sectors, he said.

FICCI said preparing for heat waves is not an afterthought for industry players and has instead become “a part of their strategic planning exercises to ensure business continuity, sustainable economic growth... and security for the workforce, and enhance their long-term sustainability and resilience”.

“Extreme heat events are likely to be very disruptive for business, impacting productivity, livelihoods and public infrastructure,” said Madhulika Sharma, member, CII Climate Change Council and chief sustainability officer, ITC.

A key strategy will be to implement localised heat wave mitigation measures to reduce the urban heat island effect, she said.

Companies have adopted measures to tackle health hazards arising from heat stress based on their concerned sectors including restricting working hours, ensuring workers stay indoors during peak temperature periods, according to industry executives.

Further, industries are pivoting towards developing and using technology along with data analytics to mitigate the impact of heat waves.