

On July 2, 2024, OSHA issued an unofficial version of a proposed rule on Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Settings. We expect that this proposed rule will be formally published in the Federal Register within the next few weeks. After publication, a formal rulemaking will ensue during which the Postal Service, along with any other impacted employers, will be afforded an opportunity to provide substantive comments to OSHA setting forth concerns and recommended changes to the proposed rule. The rulemaking process will likely result in significant changes to the proposed rule prior to its finalization. As such, implementing or planning to implement any provisions of the proposed rule would be premature.

However, while the Postal Service has no plans to begin implementation of the proposed rule, we will actively participate in the rulemaking process with the intention of working with OSHA and other impacted stakeholders to shape a final rule that both protects the health and safety of our employees while aligning with our mission and obligation to provide universal mail and package services to the nation. In that regard we believe our current Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP), which is designed specifically to protect the health and safety of our employees, provides a robust framework for the upcoming rulemaking.

While our HIPP does not include an acclimatization program (which is incompatible with our universal service obligation), it does include numerous provisions designed to protect our employees from heat related issues. Pursuant to the HIPP, the Postal Service provides mandatory heat-related and other safety training and instruction to all employees and assures they have the resources and information needed to do their jobs safely. Carriers are consistently reminded to ensure they are fully hydrated, wear appropriate clothing, including hats, get in the shade whenever possible, and take enough water and ice with them out on their routes. Carriers are further instructed to contact 9-1-1 in the event they begin experiencing any symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, and they are provided information to help them identify the symptoms associated with these two forms of heat illness. All carriers are advised to take rest breaks as needed during hot weather.

We look forward to working with all stakeholders ensure that all interests are considered, and the health and safety of employees are protected.