WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

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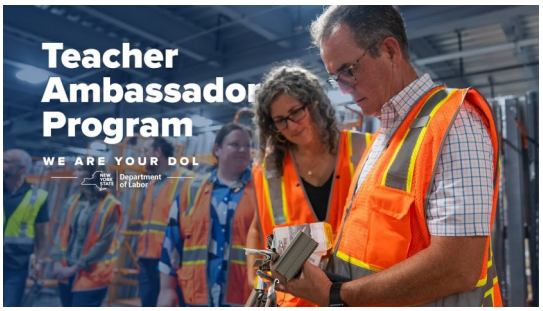

NYS Department of Labor's Teacher Ambassador Program

The New York State Department of Labor's Teacher Ambassador program is a four-week summer program that gives educators the knowledge and tools to incorporate career readiness and workforce development strategies into their 6th to 12th grade classrooms.

The program participants are local classroom teachers, school counselors, and school librarians in grades 6 through 12. This program facilitates learning directly from DOL workforce experts and local businesses. This year a regional cohort of Teacher Ambassadors will be based out of the FMS Workforce Solutions career center.

It is important to give educators workforce tools so that they can build career readiness curricula. This program aims to integrate classroom instruction with career exploration, which benefits educators and students alike. These Teacher Ambassadors have the potential to shape the students who will become tomorrow's workforce.

Ambassadors will learn how to utilize labor market data by exploring in-demand jobs, regional employment needs, and industry trends that are emerging in the region and across the state. Another topic covered will be how to utilize career development tools in the Career Centers. Some of the skills the educators will learn include resume writing, interview preparation, and networking skills, just to name a few.

The cohort will talk to various industry leaders and visit local businesses. Many businesses in the FMS region have graciously agreed to host tours for the Teacher Ambassadors. These industry visits will give the educators a look at the real-world workplace and provide insight into the career pathways within each industry.

This valuable Teacher Ambassador Program equips educators with a toolkit to prepare students for future careers.

June is National Safety Month

June 2026 is the 30th observance of National Safety month in the United States. This month is dedicated to promoting mental, physical, and emotional well-being for every team member.

Every workplace has safety policies in place. June is the perfect time to review and update these policies and procedures. Reaching beyond the workplace, it's time to encourage everyone to be mindful of safety awareness and practice prevention at home, on the road, and in the communities.

Prioritizing safety in June builds lasting habits for the entire year. Safe workplaces experience lower turnover, higher productivity, and reduced workers' compensation costs. Guarding your workforce's well-being is the ultimate investment in your organization's success.

Complete Guide to Heat Stress Prevention and Worker Acclimatization Programs

Heat stress occurs when the body can't cool itself effectively during workplace heat exposure, leading to a progressive rise in core temperature. Risks escalate with high humidity, radiant heat (e.g., hot equipment or asphalt), heavy workloads, and non-breathable PPE. Both outdoor and indoor environments are affected—construction sites, foundries, commercial kitchens, warehouses, healthcare laundry rooms, and boiler rooms all see elevated temperatures and limited air movement.

New and returning workers are at the highest risk because they haven't adapted to the heat. A structured worker acclimatization protocol that gradually increases workload and heat exposure over 7–14 days dramatically reduces incident rates. Heat waves, early-season hot spells, and night work in unconditioned spaces compound the danger. Temporary workers and those on certain medications or with underlying conditions need special attention.

Early recognition is critical to effective heat illness prevention. Mild signs can quickly progress to life-threatening occupational heat illness without prompt action. Train employees and supervisors to watch for:

- Headache, dizziness, heavy sweating or sudden cessation of sweating
- Muscle cramps, weakness, rapid pulse, nausea or vomiting
- Confusion, clumsiness, fainting, hot dry skin (medical emergency)
- Aggravating factors: high humidity, dark/heavy clothing, tight PPE, dehydration, recent illness

A comprehensive heat stress prevention program ties together engineering controls (shade, fans, cooling), administrative practices (job rotation, rescheduling heavy tasks), water-rest-shade provisions, and clear emergency response steps. Build in heat stress monitoring using Heat Index or Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) with defined action levels and on-the-spot adjustments. Formalize a buddy system and communication plan, and implement a written worker acclimatization protocol for new hires and those returning after absences. Regular, scenario-based training ensures the plan works under real conditions.

Regulatory expectations are evolving through OSHA's heat-related enforcement initiatives and state-plan rules that may require written heat illness prevention procedures. National Safety Compliance helps teams stay current and equipped with industry-specific training, topic-specific courses on heat and hydration, and practical resources to roll out policy, training, and monitoring.

What is Heat Stress and Heat-Related Illness

Heat stress occurs when the body absorbs or produces more heat than it can shed through sweating and blood flow to the skin. It is driven by workplace heat exposure from environmental conditions (air temperature, radiant heat, humidity, and air movement), metabolic workload, and clothing or PPE that traps heat. High humidity is especially dangerous because it limits sweat evaporation; indices like WBGT provide a more complete risk picture than air temperature or heat index alone.

Heat-related illnesses range from mild to life-threatening, often progressing if not addressed promptly. Key conditions and warning signs include:

- Heat rash: red, prickly skin in occluded areas.
- Heat cramps: painful muscle spasms during or after exertion.
- Heat syncope: fainting or dizziness from standing in heat.
- Heat exhaustion: heavy sweating, weakness, nausea, headache; core temperature usually under 104°F.
- Heat stroke: hot skin, confusion, seizures, loss of consciousness; core temperature often at or above 104°F—this is a medical emergency.

Risk escalates for new or returning workers without acclimatization, those wearing impermeable PPE, dehydrated workers (≥2% body weight loss), and people with certain medications or cardiovascular conditions. A worker acclimatization protocol builds heat tolerance over 7–14 days; new workers may start at about 20% of the usual heat exposure on day one, increasing by roughly 20% each subsequent day, while experienced workers returning from a break still need a shorter ramp-up. Example: a roofing crew starting in 95°F heat should scale tasks, add shaded breaks, and rotate high-exertion work; similar controls apply in hot indoor settings like foundries, bakeries, or commercial kitchens.

A robust heat stress prevention program includes heat stress monitoring (WBGT or validated heat index methods), hydration and scheduled cool-down breaks, buddy checks, symptom reporting, and rapid response plans. Training is essential for heat illness prevention, including recognizing early signs and knowing when to call EMS. National Safety Compliance provides OSHA-aligned training materials, heat illness prevention courses, acclimatization templates, and ready-to-use toolbox talks and posters to help teams implement these controls consistently across worksites.

Developing an Effective Heat Stress Prevention Program

An effective heat stress prevention program starts with a written plan that defines roles, controls, and response procedures tailored to your operations. Use a job hazard analysis to map workplace heat exposure by task, environment, and clothing. Align controls with OSHA guidance and NIOSH best practices, and review the plan pre-season, mid-season, and after any heat-related incident.

Build heat stress monitoring into daily operations. Track ambient conditions with WBGT when possible, or use the heat index with adjustments for radiant heat, workload, and PPE. Establish action levels (for example, add controls at heat index ≥91°F and adopt high-heat procedures ≥95°F) and implement ACGIH-based work/rest schedules. Stagger heavy tasks to cooler hours, provide at least 8 oz of water every 15–20 minutes, and increase electrolytes during prolonged sweating.

A worker acclimatization protocol is essential to reduce occupational heat illness. For new workers, start at roughly 20% of usual heat exposure on day 1 and increase by 20% each day; for experienced workers returning from a week away, use about 50% on day 1, 60% day 2, 80% day 3, and full duty day 4. Document progress, pair workers with a buddy, and pause acclimatization during heat waves or if symptoms appear.

Core elements to include:

- Engineering controls: shade canopies, reflective barriers, local exhaust, spot cooling.
- Administrative controls: job rotation, longer and more frequent cool-down breaks.
- Hydration and shade within a 2–3 minute walk of all work areas.
- High-heat procedures: buddy system, pre-shift tailgate, heightened supervision.
- PPE adjustments: cooling towels/vests; reduce impermeable clothing where feasible.
- Medical and emergency response: rapid cooling, 911 for suspected heat stroke, incident documentation.
- Continuous improvement: track symptoms, WBGT/heat index, and corrective actions.

Train supervisors and crews to recognize and respond to heat illness. National Safety Compliance offers OSHA-aligned heat illness prevention courses, topic-specific materials on heat stress monitoring and first aid, and visual reminders like motivational safety posters to reinforce water-rest-shade practices across shifts.

Worker Acclimatization: Building Heat Tolerance Safely

A structured acclimatization process is the backbone of any heat stress prevention program. Gradually increasing exposure allows the body to adapt—improving sweating efficiency, stabilizing heart rate, and lowering core temperature—thereby reducing the risk of occupational heat illness. Unacclimated or returning workers are at highest risk during the first 7–14 days of workplace heat exposure and need extra oversight.

Use a worker acclimatization protocol that ramps workload and heat exposure in controlled steps. For new workers, start at about 20% of the usual duration or intensity on day 1 and increase by roughly 20% per day; experienced workers returning after a week or more can begin at about 50%, then 60%, 80%, and 100% by day four. Adjust more conservatively when PPE reduces heat loss, humidity is high, or Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) or heat index readings indicate elevated risk.

Key implementation elements include:

- Set clear work/rest schedules with shaded or cooled recovery areas; provide cool, palatable water and electrolyte options every 15–20 minutes.
- Schedule the heaviest tasks for cooler hours; rotate hot tasks among crew members to limit individual heat dose.

Post YOUR Job Opening on the NYS Department of Labor Job Bank!

Contact Nancy Reccio at 518-842-3676 Ext. 3052 Email: nreccio@fmsworkforcesolutions.org OR Nancy Rogers at Ext. 3046 Email: nrogers@fmsworkforcesolutions.org

- Train supervisors and workers to recognize early symptoms (e.g., cramps, dizziness, confusion) and to stop work immediately if they occur.
- Use heat stress monitoring: track WBGT or heat index, log symptoms, and apply trigger-based controls (e.g., additional breaks, reduced pace, cooling vests).
- Pair workers in a buddy system, especially during the first week, and document acclimatization progress and deviations.

Evaluate and adjust daily. Practical indicators include absence of symptoms, normal heart-rate recovery during breaks, and minimal body weight change (<1–2%) across a shift. For example, a roofing crew in July might work 2 hours on day 1 at sunrise with extended breaks, add 1–2 hours each subsequent day, and postpone full-shift exposure until stable tolerance is demonstrated.

Note from Sarah: It's also important to note that many employees with disabilities may be incredibly heat sensitive. It's extremely important to go back through their accommodations to ensure they are getting the support they need. It's also a good idea to check in with them more often during the hot months. Some accommodations may need to change or be slightly adjusted. Do they work remotely once a week? Could they do it more when it's extremely hot? Could they get extra AC/cooling breaks? If you need any help with this, please let me know!

Note: This is an excerpt from an article on the OSHA website. Click here to read the rest of the article.

Questions????
Contact YOUR local
Disability Resource Coordinator,
Sarah Preston, at 518-842-3676 Ext. 3047
or email:
spreston@fmsworkforcesolutions.org

April Unemployment Rates

	2026	2025
Fulton County	**4.2%**	3.5%
Montgomery County	**4.2%**	3.5%
Schoharie County	**4.1%**	3.3%
New York State	**4.2%**	3.8%

To view, go to:
https://www.dol.ny.gov/newsroom,
Scroll down to local area unemployment rates and view State Labor Dept. Releases Area Rates.

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