

"Once the temperature goes up, it can get really dangerous." – Louise Ann Fernandez, an employment lawyer in Los Angeles

There were more than 3,100 heat-related work injuries or illnesses in 2006.

Prepare Your Company for Summer

For many, summer invokes thoughts of sun, sand and surf. It is a time to relax and travel. But what about those who have to work during the summer? In the business world, life and work must continue.

Companies should not see summer as a slow time when sales are poor and productivity is low. Instead, this is a time to maintain productivity and time to re-engage employees in health and wellness efforts. It is also an ideal time to make changes to the work environment so that it supports healthy behavior.

Help Employees Stay Hydrated

The high temperatures of the summer months cause many people to reach for a beverage more than they do at other times of the year. This is particularly true of those who spend a lot of time outdoors. Staying well hydrated is very important because dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion and possibly heat stroke.

Employers can help their employees stay hydrated by:

- Having a water cooler at the workplace. You can even get employees to chip in by starting a "water club".
- Offering water at meetings and



Help employees stay cool during the summer by providing water at work and company events.

- company events.
- Reducing the cost of water and juices in vending machines and cafeterias so they are cheaper than sugary drinks.
- Offer water bottles as incentive prizes for wellness program activities.

Help Employees Enjoy the Outdoors

With warmer weather comes the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. You can organize groups of employees to walk during lunch or the cooler hours of mid-morning. Another idea is to partner with your local park to hold a summer outing for employees that incorporates

physical activity. You can also install bike racks and encourage employees to bike to work.

If planning outdoor activities, here are a few tips:

- Encourage employees to use sunscreen when outdoors for extended periods of time. You can even provide small, single-use packets of sunscreen at outdoor events/activities.
- Be mindful of employees who have allergies to pollen and other outdoor allergens.
- Be prepared for emergency events by training employees in first aid and/or CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Help Employees Breathe Easier

Good air quality is not just about the outdoors. Ensuring good indoor air quality is just as important and can be accomplished by addressing tobacco smoke.

Exposure to secondhand smoke increases a non-smoker's risk of developing heart disease and lung cancer. Tobacco smoke also poses a major trigger for those with

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WELLNESS WATCH

Cancer continues to be a costly disease, both in terms of health care costs and lost productivity. According to Unum, a group disability provider, cancer remains the leading cause of long-term disability absence for the seventh straight year. A bit of good news, however, is that with increasing survivorship rates, many cancer patients are returning to work as cancer survivors. From 2001 to 2005, the rate of short-term cancer disability cases that returned to work increased 77%, along with 24% of long-term cancer disability cases.

Prepare Your Workplace for Summer

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asthma. Implementing a tobacco-free worksite policy is a great way to eliminate secondhand smoke onsite. It can also help facilitate the quitting process for employees who do smoke. Here are some suggestions:

- Inform employees of tobacco-free policy in writing.
- Post “no smoking” signs at entrances.
- Remove ashtrays from premises.
- Provide onsite cessation programs to help those who want to quit.
- Refer employees to the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line. Call 1.877.270.STOP or visit <http://livehealthygeorgia.org/quitLine/index.shtml>.

Keep it Natural

With so many fruits in season during the summer months, infuse your workplace with them. Whether in the cafeteria, through vending machines, or snacks available at work, there are many creative ways to encourage employees to eat healthier.

- Offer dried fruit and trail mix instead of candy in your candy dish.
- Replace high-fat, high-sugar vending machine snacks with nuts, fruit cups and other low-fat items.



- Try a fruit bowl in the break room or other common space.

What about those meetings and company picnics? It always seems so difficult to eat healthy when you are presented with a smorgasbord of tasty treats.

- Try fruit parfaits and fruit salad at breakfast meetings instead of donuts.
- Serve frozen yogurt or fruit sorbet instead of ice cream at company socials and celebrations.
- Include vegetarian options on menus at meetings and other events.
- Don't forget the watermelon at the company picnic.

Other things you can do at your workplace include:

- Consider planting a company garden and grow simple things like tomatoes, peppers, and herbs.
- Organize an onsite-farmers market where employees can purchase fruits and vegetables.
- Organize a “build your salad” event where employees can each bring a different ingredient and make their own salad.

Help Employees to be Prepared

This is a good time to review safety information with employees and to check and restock emergency supplies. Develop and practice your company's emergency response plan. Make sure that your plan is more than just an evacuation plan and that it includes planned action for medical emergencies like heart attack and stroke. Other things to help employees get prepared include:

- Offering training on first aid, CPR, and use of an AED (automatic external defibrillator).
- Designating onsite emergency responders and assign tasks like calling 911.
- Equipping each workstation with emergency supplies like a flashlight and first aid kit.

What About Outdoor Workers?

Those whose work requires them to be outdoors during the summer months need to be particularly cautious as the temperature begins to rise. It is important that employees be educated on sun safety and heat-related injuries. Companies should encourage employees to:

- Wear hats and sunglasses
- Apply sunscreen
- Drink lots of water
- Take additional breaks

Two helpful fact sheets from OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) are [Protecting Workers from Effects of Heat](#) and [Working Outdoors in Warm Climates](#).

Summer isn't just a time to lay back and soak up the sun. Get employees and your work environment geared up for summer wellness efforts. Also remember to keep employee safety a priority.

Health Observances



June

National Cancer Survivors Day (June 1)
National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation
<http://www.ncsdf.org/>

National Headache Awareness Week (June 1-7)
National Headache Foundation
<http://www.headaches.org/>

Sun Safety Week (June 8-14)
Sun Safety Alliance
<http://www.sunafetyalliance.org/>

National Men's Health Week (June 9-15)
Men's Health Network
<http://www.menshealthweek.org/>

Fireworks Safety Month (June 1 - July 4)
Prevent Blindness America
<http://www.preventblindness.org/>

Home Safety Month
Home Safety Council
<http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/homesafetymonth>

Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month
Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America
<http://www.myasthenia.org/>

National Aphasia Month
National Aphasia Association
<http://www.aphasia.org/>

National Scleroderma Awareness Month
Scleroderma Foundation
<http://www.scleroderma.org/>

National Scoliosis Awareness Month
National Scoliosis Foundation
<http://www.scoliosis.org/>

July

Hemochromatosis Awareness Month
Iron Disorders Institute
<http://www.irondisorders.org/>

International Group B Strep Awareness Month
Group B Strep International
<http://www.groupbstrepinternational.org/>

UV Safety Month
American Academy of Ophthalmology
<http://www.aao.org/eyemd>

August

Cataract Awareness Month
American Academy of Ophthalmology
<http://www.aao.org/aaosite/eyemd/cataract.cfm>

Children's Eye Health & Safety Month
Prevent Blindness America
<http://www.preventblindness.org/>

National Immunization Awareness Month
National Immunization Program
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines>

National Minority Donor Day (August 1)
National Immunization Program
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines>

Psoriasis Awareness Month
National Psoriasis Foundation
<http://www.psoriasis.org/>



RESOURCE CORNER

OTHER GEORGIA PROGRAMS

Get Outdoor Georgia

The Get Outdoors Georgia initiative focuses on recreation that highlights the link between participation in outdoor recreation and improved health for people of all ages and abilities; decreased obesity; and an emphasis on children's early involvement in nature for establishing life-long physical, mental and community benefits.

For more information or to find activity-based events in your area, visit the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites at <http://www.georgiastateparks.org/net/content/page.aspx?s=144673.0.1.5>.

You can also visit the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' website to learn more about state's natural and cultural resources at <http://www.gadnr.org/>.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Making Your Workplace Smokefree: A Decision Makers Guide. This resource guide from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention includes sample smokefree policies. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/secondhand_smoke/00_pdfs/fullguide.pdf

Smoke-free Policies: Establishing a smoke-free ordinance to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke in indoor worksites and public places. Resource guide from the Partnership for Prevention. Available at: <http://www.prevent.org/actionguides/SmokeFreePolicies.pdf>

Georgia Smokefree Air Act. Online resources include guide for businesses and employers, sample signage, and printable Quit Line brochures. For more information, go to www.dhr.georgia.gov/gasmokefreeair.

Georgia Tobacco Quit Line
The Georgia Tobacco Quit Line is a free cessation resource available to all Georgians ages 13 and older. 1.877.270.STOP
<http://livehealthygeorgia.org/quitLine/index.shtml>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Case Management Society of America Annual Conference and Expo
June 17-20, 2008, Orlando, FL
<http://www.cmsa.org/conference>

Society for Human Resource Management Annual Conference
June 22-25, 2008, Chicago, IL
<http://www.shrm.org/conferences/annual/>

National Wellness Conference
July 12-17, 2008, Stevens Point, WI
<http://www.hbce.com/>

Health Care Management Conference
July 14-16, 2008, Seattle, WA
<http://www.ifebp.org/Education/Schedule/>

Achieving Return on Investment for Wellness
July 15-17, 2008, Washington, DC
<http://www.worldrg.com/showConference.cfm?confCode=HW08059>

Benefits Management Forum & Expo
Sept. 21-23, 2008, National Harbor, MD
<http://benefits-forum.com/index.html>

WORKSITE WELLNESS IN THE NEWS



- [Team Pursuits that Play Well in the Workplace](#) – Financial Times, March 4, 2008
- [How Private a Matter is Employee's Illness?](#) – Financial Times, March 7, 2008
- [New Jersey Assembly Approves Paid Leave to Care for Baby or Ailing Kin](#) – NY Times, March 14, 2008
- ['Fit Note' Plan to Stem Incapacity Benefit Flow](#) – Financial Times, March 18, 2008
- [Listen to What Your Workstation is Telling You](#) – Financial Times, April 2, 2008
- [Wal-Mart Chief Scolds Business for Avoiding Healthcare Debate](#) – Financial Times, April 3, 2008
- [Catholic School Teachers Strike Over Health Care and Plan Another Walkout](#) – NY Times, April 5, 2008
- [Visible Measures that Help Reduce Absenteeism](#) – Financial Times, April 17, 2008
- [Hide the Doritos! HR is Coming](#) – BusinessWeek, April 17, 2008
- [On Your Bike](#) – Financial Times, April 18, 2008
- [Continental Ends Merger Talks Over Fears for United's Financial Health](#) – Financial Times, April 28, 2008
- [Would You Hire a Pregnant Woman?](#) – BusinessWeek, April 29, 2008
- [A healthy workforce means healthy profits](#) – Financial Times, May 1, 2008
- [Sickened by the Office \(Really\)](#) – New York Times, May 1, 2008
- [Government Picks Up Tab of Uninsured Workers](#) – BusinessWeek, May 2, 2008
- [Pregnancy and Work Can Work](#) – BusinessWeek, May 2, 2008
- [The Issue: Talking About Depression at Work](#) – BusinessWeek, June 4, 2008

GA's Worksite Health Initiative
GA DHR – Div. of Public Health
www.health.state.ga.us/programs/worksitehealth
WorksiteHealth@dhr.state.ga.us