

Key requirements: Oregon OSHA's rule addressing high ambient temperatures in labor housing



Effective June 15, 2022, Oregon OSHA adopted [subparagraph 25 to OAR 437-004-1120, Agricultural Labor Housing and Related Facilities](#) to ensure that workers living in employer-provided labor housing can recover after working long hours outdoors. This fact sheet describes the rule's key requirements.

Heat in Labor Housing

Cooling areas

When it's 80 degrees Fahrenheit or more outside, and bedrooms cannot maintain a temperature of 78 degrees F or less (using air conditioners or other reliable means), then employers must provide at least one cooling area for occupants to cool off.

The cooling area must be large enough to allow use by at least 50 percent of the occupants at any time and must use at least one of the following methods:

- Give occupants continual access to one or more common rooms that are maintained at or below a temperature of 78 degrees F with air conditioners, evaporative coolers, air purifiers with coolers, or other reliable means. This can be done with existing common rooms, otherwise unused housing units, or other available indoor spaces that do not present additional risks to the occupants.
- Give occupants continual access to outdoor rest areas that are located away from work areas or activities that could increase their exposure to heat. The rest areas must:
 - Be shaded by natural or artificial means so that occupants can sit or stand in the shade.

- Have water misters, cooling vests, cooling towels, or equally effective means of relief. If these can be used by only one person at a time, then enough must be available to allow use by at least 50 percent of the occupants at any time; they must not be shared without being washed.
- Locate chairs, benches, and other seating arranged in a manner that encourages their use.

It is encouraged to provide at least some of the required space using the methods listed in the indoor option.



Minimizing heat in housing units

If rooms where people sleep are not able to maintain an indoor temperature of 78 degrees F or less with air conditioners, evaporative coolers, air purifiers with coolers, or other reliable means, then employers must:

- Protect windows from direct sunlight in a way that minimizes radiant heat during all hours of the day. This can be done with natural or artificial shade. Coverings and shades must not prevent the windows from opening and closing. If window coverings are used, they must deflect the sun and not simply absorb the heat. For example, hanging black plastic garbage bags over the windows would not deflect the heat (but would absorb it) and, therefore, would not meet the intent of the rule.
- Make fans available at no cost for any housing occupants who want to use them.

Temperature awareness

Employers must provide a thermometer that displays the temperature in both Fahrenheit and Celsius in each individual housing unit to ensure that occupants know the current indoor temperature. Employers are

encouraged, but not required, to provide a device that also measures humidity.

Employee and occupant information

Employees must receive the training required by [437-004-1131\(5\)](https://www.oregon.gov/OSHA/Default.aspx?Menu=437-004-1131(5)), [Heat Illness prevention](#). Employers must also display the “[Heat Risks in Housing](#)” poster ([Spanish](#)) provided by Oregon OSHA in one or more locations that housing occupants will see, and must include emergency contact information on the poster.

Access to emergency services

Employers must ensure that occupants have access at all times to a working telephone to contact emergency services. A cellphone may be used only if reception in the area is reliable.



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WORKERS

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The Technical Section of Oregon OSHA produced this fact sheet to highlight health and safety programs and rules. The information is intended to supplement the rules and provide best practices to employers.