

SUPPORT HB 1092 / SB 288

Topic: Protect Virginia Workers From Heat-Related Illness and Death

Bill Patron: Del. Hernandez, Sen. Aird

OVERVIEW:

Hundreds of Virginia workers visit the emergency room or miss at least one day of work each year because of heat-related illness. Protections under current state law are insufficient, leaving workers and their families to suffer preventable harm.

HB 1092 and SB288 direct the Virginia Safety and Health Codes Board to develop and adopt commonsense workplace heat regulations in consultation with the Department of Labor and Industries (DOLI) and an advisory panel of employee advocates and other experts. The bill also enables employees to seek civil damages against employers who violate the regulations.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- **Data and Research:** Excessive heat exposure poses a direct threat to Virginia workers and the Commonwealth's economy. 2024 was one of the hottest years on record, and the top ten hottest years all occurred in the past decade. In Virginia, multiple cities broke their heat records, including Richmond (101F), Charlottesville (103F), Roanoke (103F), Danville (100F), and Norfolk (99F). Despite these heat increases, the Commonwealth of Virginia does not have a heat stress standard.
- **The Benefits:** Evidence shows that heat stress hurts worker health, lowers workplace productivity, and imposes avoidable costs on employers. The good news is that commonsense workplace heat regulations can improve worker health and improve the bottom line of employers. A nationwide study of more than 800,000 reported workplace injuries found that the odds of traumatic—and expensive—work-related injuries increased at a heat index of approximately 85°F. That increase, however, was lower in the five states with heat standards as of 2023 (California, Colorado, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington)
- **The Time for Action is Now:** During a severe heat wave in June 2025, Virginia set a new record for reported heat-related health illnesses across the commonwealth, with 828 people visiting emergency rooms and urgent care clinics over just four days. These types of events are becoming more common as Virginia's climate heats up, putting workers in hot indoor and outdoor environments at particular risk of heat-related illness, injury, and death. Virginia's workers need protection now.



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