Seasonal Work: Summer Heat, Winter Cold, Shoulder-Season Variability Fatality File



US Department of Labor cites Alabama construction employer after heat illness claims life of 33-year-old worker at Huntsville job site

What Happened

On July 28, 2023, a 33-year-old construction worker died after suffering heat stroke while hand-forming concrete curbs in Huntsville, Alabama. As the heat index neared 107 degrees and humidity climbed to 85 percent, coworkers observed him stumbling, talking incoherently, and vomiting before he became unresponsive. He was transported to hospital and died just two hours after being admitted — one of 19 workers on site that day, all working 10-hour shifts in direct sun with no shade or structured rest breaks.

What Went Wrong

OSHA determined that SJ&L General Contractor LLC exposed all 19 workers to extreme heat without any prevention measures in place — no shade, no rest schedule, and no acclimatization plan. The employer was cited and faced $16,131 in proposed penalties.

The Bottom Line

“Had the employer ensured access to shade and rest in this brutal heat, this worker might not have lost their life,” said OSHA Area Office Director Joel Batiz. A worker stumbling or speaking incoherently in the heat is a medical emergency. Water, shade, rest, and acclimatization are not optional — they are the controls that keep workers alive.

Source: https://www.osha.gov/