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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Introduced By: Representative Matthew S. Dawson

Date Introduced: March 18, 2026

Referred To: House Labor

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 23-1.1 of the General Laws entitled "Division of Occupational
2 Health" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **23-1.1-18. Extreme temperatures employee protection.**

4 (a) As used herein, the term "extreme temperatures" means temperatures at or above ninety
5 degrees Fahrenheit (90° F), or at or below thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit (32° F).

6 (b) Employers shall implement plans and conduct business activities to prevent and reduce
7 exposure of employees to extreme temperatures. These plans and activities shall include, but not
8 be limited to, the following:

9 (1) Employees shall have access to paid rest breaks, adequate shade, warming or cooling
10 stations, drinking water, personal protective equipment, and other protections from extreme
11 temperatures in regard to heat and cold.

12 (2) Pursuant to a program established in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c)
13 of this section, employers shall require supervisors and managers to:

14 (i) Complete the department of health's online public tutorial program quarterly to
15 recognize the signs of overexposure to hot and cold temperatures, such as injuries and illnesses
16 caused by extreme temperatures, and ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment is
17 available such as hats, gloves, winter coats, cooling vests, and sunscreen as appropriate for the
18 extreme temperatures; and

19 (ii) Ensure that heating and cooling equipment is maintained and functional.

1 (3) Further protections shall be established for employees who work in vehicles.
2 Employees who spend more than sixty (60) minutes in vehicles, or whose workplace is considered
3 a vehicle, shall have adequate insulation and heating/cooling equipment, within the vehicle to
4 protect the occupants from extreme heat or cold.

5 (4) Further protections shall be established for employees who work in a warehouse.
6 Employees who spend more than sixty (60) minutes in a warehouse, or whose workplace is
7 considered a warehouse, shall have adequate insulation and heating/cooling equipment within the
8 warehouse to protect the employees from extreme heat or cold.

9 (5) Further protections shall be established for employees who work outdoors, including,
10 but not limited to, construction sites, farms, vineyards, recreation, and fishing sites. Employees who
11 spend more than sixty (60) minutes outdoors, or whose workplace is considered outdoors, shall
12 have adequate heating and cooling equipment, within the working space to protect the employees
13 from extreme heat or cold.

14 (6) Pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, free and effective training on temperature
15 safety shall be provided quarterly for employees who work in a warehouse, in vehicles, or outdoors,
16 including, but not limited to, construction sites, farms, vineyards, recreation, and fishing sites. This
17 training shall take place quarterly, during work hours and include the following elements:

18 (i) Inform and assist employees to identify the risk factors, signs, and symptoms of cold
19 stress and heat related illnesses and the necessary medical responses;

20 (ii) Inform the employees of the paid rest breaks, adequate shade, warming or cooling
21 stations, drinking water, personal protective equipment, heating and cooling equipment, and other
22 protections which shall be provided;

23 (iii) Outline and clarify the employer's procedures for monitoring temperature conditions
24 and provide workers with the ability to participate in the monitoring process; and

25 (iv) Demonstrate the proper use of personal protective equipment, such as hats, gloves,
26 winter coats, cooling vests, sunscreen, and related protective equipment.

27 (c) The department of health shall create and implement an online public tutorial program,
28 for supervisors and managers to recognize the signs of overexposure to hot and cold temperatures,
29 such as injuries and illnesses caused by extreme temperatures, and ensure that appropriate personal
30 protective equipment is available, including hats, gloves, winter coats, cooling vests, and sunscreen,
31 as appropriate for the extreme temperatures.

32 (d) For any employer to discharge employees or discriminate against them resulting from
33 the failure of an employer to implement or perform any of the duties required by this section, shall
34 be an unlawful employment practice, in addition to the provisions of § 28-5-7.

1 (e) The department of health may promulgate rules and regulations as necessary to
2 implement and administer this section.

3 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

1 This act would require employers to protect employees from extreme temperatures through
2 rest breaks, PPE, training, and equipment, and mandate training, to recognize and mitigate heat-
3 and cold-related risks. The act would require the department of health to establish and implement
4 a training program.

5 This act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

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