

## Unofficial Translation

### Decision of the Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs No. (17) for the year 2021 specifying measures to protect workers from heat stress

The Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs,

After perusal of the Labour Law promulgated by Law No. 14 of 2004 and its amending laws, Emiri Decision No. 29 of 1996 on the decisions of the Council of Ministers and submitted to the Emir for approval and issuance;

Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing Decision No. 16 of 2007 specifying working hours in outdoor places during summer time;

And on the adoption by the Council of Ministers of this Draft Law during its regular meeting (40) of 2020 held on 21/10/2020

Decided the following:

#### Article (1)

In the implementation of the provisions of this decision, the following words shall have the respective meaning assigned to them unless the context requires otherwise:

**Heat Stress:** occurs when the body fails to maintain its normal temperature in response to physical effort made while exposed to high temperatures combined with humidity. This may occur under direct sunlight, in shaded areas or indoor and could lead to illness due to the malfunction of the parts in charge of regulating body temperature, resulting in a number of health problems.

Workplaces: places where workers need to be or go to by reason of their work.

Outdoor workplaces: workplaces where workers are exposed to weather conditions such as solar radiation, heat and humidity.

Shaded and ventilated workplaces: covers outdoor workplaces where there is a sufficient and suitable system of artificial ventilation, where workers are not exposed to solar radiation, and where there is no exposure to heat from operating machines.

Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index: A system used to assess the ambient temperature of a work environment. It measures the combined proportional effect of dry bulb temperature (DB), globe temperature (GT) and wet bulb (WB), using specific devices.

**Heat Stress Index:** the WBGT temperature announced by the Ministry or recorded by the company in the workplace using approved WBGT devices.

## **Article (2)**

It is prohibited to work in the sun, in outdoor workplaces or in places that are not shaded and ventilated, during the period from June 1 to September 15 of each year, starting from 10 a.m., until 3:30 p.m.

## **Article (3)**

Employers shall set a schedule with the daily working hours in accordance with the provisions of this Decision, and publish this schedule in a visible location, which is easy for all workers to view, and for labour inspectors to check during their inspection visits.

## **Article (4)**

Employers shall follow the guidelines on heat stress mitigation issued by the Ministry at all times and shall observe the following:

1. Complete a risk assessment to mitigate heat stress together with the workers and update it regularly. A copy of the assessment shall be kept at the workplace to be available to labour inspectors for review.
2. Provide training on heat stress to all workers by the beginning of the month of May of each year.
3. Provide free and suitably cool drinking water to all workers throughout the working time.
4. Secure shaded rest areas that are easily accessible to workers and effective in providing shelter from solar radiation and high temperatures during breaks.
5. Provide workers with appropriate personal protective equipment for the hot weather including thin, loose and light-colored clothing.
6. Perform annual health check-ups to diagnose and manage chronic diseases that may contribute to the risk of heat stress. The medical examination shall be performed at no cost to the worker. Employers shall keep a record of such medical examination.
7. Train paramedics and occupational safety and health supervisors to provide guidance and first aid to workers.
8. Adopt the Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) index to assess the level of occupational heat stress. The assessment shall take into account all weather parameters: solar radiation, relative humidity, air temperature, wind speed. Employers shall take the necessary measures in case of surges in the indicators.
9. Monitor and record weather conditions in the workplace and stop the work in workplaces where the WBGT index rises beyond 32.1 °C.

## **Article (5)**

When two or more employers undertake activities simultaneously at one work site, the main contractor shall commit to follow-up on the application of the measures prescribed in the previous article with the remaining employers.

#### **Article (6)**

Workers have the right to stop working and submit a complaint before the Ministry when they have good reason to believe that heat stress is a threat to their safety or health. Workers shall inform their supervisors to examine their situation. In such cases, workers may not be dismissed, subjected to discrimination or deprived of their rights.

#### **Article (7)**

In case of violation of the provisions of this Decision, a workplace may be shut down, in part or in whole, by a decision of the Minister.

#### **Article (8)**

This Ministerial Decision does not apply to the activities undertaken by companies working on oil and gas projects.

#### **Article 9**

Decision No. 16 of 2007 issued by the Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing and any other provision that contravenes the provisions of this Decision, shall be revoked.

#### **Article (11)**

All the competent authorities, each within its own competence, shall implement the provisions of this decision, which shall enter into force on the day that follows its publication in the Official Gazette.

**Yousef bin Mohamed Al-Othman Fakhroo**

**Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs**

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