



Fact Sheets (Program Highlights)

01/01/1992 - OSHA's Field Sanitation Standard

[← Fact Sheets \(Program Highlights\) - Table of Contents](#)

U.S. Department of Labor
Program Highlights

Fact Sheet No. OSHA 92-25

OSHA'S FIELD SANITATION STANDARD

SUMMARY

Requires employers of 11 or more field workers to provide toilets, potable drinking water, and handwashing facilities to hand laborers in the field; to provide each employee reasonable use of the above; and to inform each employee of the importance of good hygiene practices.

EFFECTIVE DATES

- * May 30, 1987 for potable drinking water
- * July 30, 1987 for toilets and handwashing facilities

SCOPE OF COVERAGE

Any agricultural establishment hiring 11 or more workers for hand labor. Includes work done by hand or with hand tools during cultivation, weeding, planting, and harvesting of vegetables, nuts, fruits, seedlings, or other crops including mushrooms, and the packing of produce in the field into containers, whether performed on the ground, on moving machinery, or in a shed.

Does not cover logging operations, the care and feeding of livestock, or hand-labor operations in permanent structures (e.g. canning facilities or packing houses).

POPULATION COVERED

An estimated 471,600 farm employees, about one-fourth of whom are migrant workers, on roughly 54,000 farms with 11 or more employees. From 25 to 30 percent of these workers are women; the number also includes young adults and children under 18.

The greatest number of field employees covered tend or harvest fruits and nut trees (175,000). Others tend vegetables and melons (137,000), and tobacco (98,000), other field crops including sugar cane and beets (33,000), cotton (9,000), and "others" (10,000). About 11,000 mushroom workers also are included, though they work under shelter.

The distribution by states of these workers include: California 137,000 (29.2 percent), Florida 63,800 (13.5 percent), North Carolina 39,600 (8.4 percent), Kentucky 28,700 (6.1 percent), Washington 26,300 (5.6 percent), Hawaii 14,400 (3.1 percent), Michigan 11,600 (2.5 percent), Pennsylvania 10,700 (2.3 percent), Idaho 10,400 (2.2 percent), Texas 10,000 (2.1 percent), Georgia 9,900 (2.1 percent), Oregon 9,800 (2.1 percent), and Tennessee 9,400 (2.0 percent). The other states all have less than 2 percent.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

-- "Potable drinking water," suitably cool and in sufficient amounts, dispensed in single-use drinking cups or by fountains, located so as to be readily accessible to all employees.

-- One toilet and a handwashing facility for each 20 employees, located within a quarter mile walk, or if not feasible, at the closest point of vehicular access. Such facilities are not required for employees who do field work for three hours or less each day. Pre-moistened towelettes, previously allowed by some state regulations, cannot be substituted for handwashing facilities.

-- Maintenance in accordance with public health sanitation practices including upkeep of water quality through daily change or as often as needed; toilets being kept clean, sanitary, and operational; handwashing facilities being refilled with potable water as necessary and kept clean and sanitary; and the prevention of any unsanitary conditions through waste disposal.

-- Opportunity for reasonable use through notification of each employee by the employer of the location of the water and the facilities and the allowance of reasonable opportunities during the workday to use them. The employer also must inform the employee of the relevant health hazards in the field and the practices necessary to minimize exposure to them.

BENEFITS

-- An expected reduction because of the new standard in the number of workers who become ill from intestinal, urinary, heat, skin, and agrichemical-related illnesses by about 179,000 cases. The new federal standard and state standards already in place are expected to reduce the total number of workers who could have been expected to become ill from 270,134 to 91,482 cases, a reduction of two-thirds.

-- A total of 214,319 expected parasitic cases reduced by 139,307; 20,280 gastrointestinal cases reduced by 12,776; 4,148 viral hepatitis cases reduced by 1,037 because of the new federal standard and state standards.

-- A sharp reduction of heat-related deaths and injuries. Department figures show three of every 1,000 farm workers will suffer from heatstroke during their working lives. Farm workers suffer a risk of heat-related injuries that is the highest rate for any occupation. The new standard plus state standards are expected to reduce heat-related injuries among those covered by more than 90 percent.

-- Fewer urinary tract infections, most common among female workers, arising from urine retention and the use of unsanitary materials for personal hygiene in the field. The new standard plus state standards are expected to reduce these from 18,436 to 2,765 cases.

-- Agrichemical and agrichemical residue exposure, often unreported due to the non-specific nature of the symptoms, are expected to be reduced from 10,140 to 1,014 cases.

###

This is one of a series of fact sheets highlighting U.S. Department of Labor programs. It is intended as a general description only and does not carry the force of legal opinion. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 219-8151. TDD message referral phone: 1-800-326-2577.

 [Fact Sheets \(Program Highlights\) - Table of Contents](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [Freedom of Information Act](#) | [Customer Survey](#)
[Privacy and Security Statement](#) | [Disclaimers](#)

Occupational Safety & Health Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210