

Weathering the Storm

Preparing for Climate-Driven Safety Risks

Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it's a real-time disruptor impacting workplace safety across the globe. From devastating wildfires to unprecedented floods, the consequences of a changing climate are creating new and intensified risks for workers in various sectors.

The Climate Reality: A Statistical Snapshot

European Union:

- A recent report by the European Environment Agency (EEA) found that extreme weather events, including heatwaves and floods, cost the EU an estimated €560 billion between 1980 and 2020.
- Wildfire seasons are becoming longer and more intense, particularly in Southern Europe.

North America & USA:

- In North America, wildfires have burned millions of acres, with devastating consequences for forestry workers, firefighters, and communities.
- The U.S. experienced a record number of billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in recent years, impacting construction, agriculture, and transportation industries.

Heightened Risks for Workers

The intensification of climate-related hazards directly translates to increased risks for workers. These include:

- **Heat stress and dehydration:** Particularly for outdoor workers in agriculture, construction, and transportation.
- **Exposure to hazardous air quality:** Resulting from wildfires and dust storms.
- **Increased risk of injuries:** Due to flooding, landslides, and extreme weather events.
- **Mental health impacts:** Resulting from displacement, loss of livelihoods, and exposure to traumatic events.

A Proactive Approach: Integrating Climate into Safety Strategies

To effectively protect workers in a changing climate, organizations must adopt a proactive and integrated approach to safety management. This includes:

- **Climate-Integrated Risk Assessment:** Conduct thorough risk assessments that consider the potential impacts of climate change on workplace hazards.
- **Scenario Modelling:** Develop scenario models to anticipate and prepare for a range of climate-related events.
- **Vulnerability Mapping:** Identify areas and populations that are most vulnerable to climate hazards.
- **Updated Emergency Protocols:** Revise and update emergency protocols to address the specific challenges posed by climate-related disasters.

Looking Ahead

As climate change continues to reshape our world, it is imperative that we prioritize the safety and well-being of workers. By integrating climate considerations into our safety strategies, we can build more resilient workplaces and protect those who are on the front lines of a changing world.