



## Carlton Hilson Addresses Workplace Safety Amid Heat and Wildfires in Construction Dive

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As the summer of 2023 presents outdoor workplaces with conditions like historically high temperatures and wildfire smoke throughout the country, Carlton Hilson was quoted in a July 25, 2023 article in *Construction Dive* discussing workforce safety under these challenging conditions.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is working on standards for employers during periods of extreme heat and has issued guidance to employers on protection from wildfire smoke, but many contractors have said that the lack of mandatory rules around wildfire protections have put them in a difficult position with owners that are resistant to slowed production from work delays. While OSHA works on a formal standard, the agency has instituted a national emphasis program for its inspectors regarding employees working outside during periods of extreme heat.

“A national emphasis program is just what it sounds like,” said Hilson. “It’s an instruction to their inspectors to focus on heat issues.” This could mean interviewing and talking to employees during an inspection about fall hazards or other potential safety issues. “It just gives them the legal authority to do an inspection and ask those questions,” Hilson added.

While we await final guidance, contractors can include provisions in their contracts to protect themselves if conditions become unsafe to work. “We’ve been doing just that, putting in a legal duties and obligations section that lays out specific responsibilities and

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expectations for safety and health,” said Hilson.

For the full article, please [click here](#).