



NHAI Takes Measures to Mitigate Heatwave Effect on Workforce involved in Construction and Maintenance of National Highways

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In view of the ongoing heatwave conditions and above normal temperatures during the current summer season, NHAI has issued comprehensive guidelines aimed at mandating precautionary measures to safeguard health of the workforce and ensure safety of National Highway users during the heatwave conditions. The guidelines outline mandatory safety protocols for construction sites, maintenance work and toll plazas under NHAI jurisdiction. The safety measures based on best practices will be immediately implemented by all contractors, concessionaires and toll collection agencies to ensure staff and workers' well-being.

Guidelines for Construction & Maintenance Projects

NHAI has directed contractors and concessioners to provide staggered working hours for workers to avoid peak heat hours, typically between 12:00 PM and 4:00 PM. Labour-intensive and heat-generating activities such as asphalt laying, welding etc. are to be carried out during early morning or late evening hours. Mandatory cooling breaks at regular intervals have been prescribed with increased frequency during extreme heat alerts.

Special emphasis has been placed on acclimatization of workers, ensuring that new or returning personnel are gradually exposed to strenuous tasks over a period of 3–5 days. Workers are also to be trained to identify and respond to heat-related illnesses or health issues, including heatstroke.

To ensure adequate on-site support, temporary shaded rest areas with proper ventilation along with uninterrupted access to cool and potable drinking water are to be provided. First-aid stations, patrolling vehicles and site supervisors are required to stock Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) and glucose. While adherence to wearing safety gear on construction sites remains mandatory, the use of breathable, cotton-based high-visibility vests has been advised.

Emergency preparedness has also been strengthened. NHAI patrol ambulances are to be equipped with ice packs, cold water, and IV fluids. Route Patrolling Units (RPU) have been instructed to increase monitoring frequency to assist Highway users facing heat-related issues and vehicle breakdowns due to overheating.

Guidelines for Toll Plazas & Operations

For toll operations, NHAI has advised minimizing outdoor exposure of personnel during peak heat hours from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM through optimized shift management and rotational rosters. Night hours will be effectively utilized for administrative and maintenance operational activities that do not require peak-hour lane presence. Toll Plaza staff will also be trained in recognizing and responding to heat-related health conditions for assisting staff and commuters.

Also, cooling rooms with air-conditioning in toll booths, rest areas and office blocks will be created. Temporary sheds and awnings to be installed to provide shade for personnel working near lanes and in open areas. In addition, continuous availability of cool drinking water, along with ORS and glucose, has been made mandatory at all toll locations. To ensure compliance, NHAI field officials will conduct weekly inspections across project sites and toll plazas.

These measures will help to minimise heatwave effect while ensuring uninterrupted National Highway construction and operations. NHAI remains committed to prioritizing the well-being of the workforce and safety of the National Highway users across the country.

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