

2SLGBTQIA+ LENS ON THE OFL HEAT STRESS CAMPAIGN

Why does the OFL Heat Stress Campaign matter to 2SLGBTQIA+?

This campaign is particularly important for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community for several reasons:

Health and Safety: The 2SLGBTQIA+ community often faces unique health challenges, including higher rates of certain chronic conditions that can be exacerbated by heat stress. 2SLGBTQIA+ people experience worse health outcomes than their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts, including disproportionate rates of cancer, chronic fatigue and heart disease. Ensuring that workplaces are safe and have regulations to manage heat stress is crucial for the well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ workers. By advocating for safe work environments with proper heat stress management, we can help protect the health of 2SLGBTQIA+ employees and ensure they have equal opportunities to thrive in their workplaces.

Health Disparities:

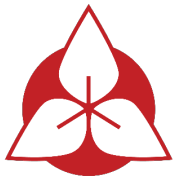
The unique health challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ workers are often even further complicated due to societal stigma, discrimination, and lack of culturally competent healthcare. These disparities can affect their overall health, making them more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. The campaign is pushing for employers and policymakers to consider these factors when implementing heat stress prevention measures that will help to ensure 2SLGBTQIA+ workers are protected from heat stress illnesses in their work environments. By advocating for inclusive heat stress prevention measures that consider the unique needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ workers, we can promote a safer and healthier work environment for everyone.

Workplace Discrimination and Accommodations:

Discrimination or lack of understanding in the workplace can affect how employers respond to heat stress concerns. 2SLGBTQIA+ workers may face additional challenges in requesting accommodations (such as breaks, access to shade, or modified work schedules) due to fear of discrimination. It's vital that employers implement inclusive policies that cater to the needs of all employees, ensuring that workers are not only safe from heat stress but also feel supported and valued in their work environment, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Inclusive Workplaces: 2SLGBTQIA+ people, particularly those who are Black or Indigenous or both, are overrepresented in low-wage sectors, often working in environments that are not traditionally air-conditioned, such as manual labour sectors, retail, or hospitality. These workers are at a higher risk of heat stress due to the nature of their jobs. The campaign advocates for legislation that sets heat limits in workplaces, which is a step towards creating more inclusive and comfortable conditions for all employees.

Access to Resources: Having access to resources plays a big role in dealing with heat stress. For example, 2SLGBTQIA+ workers who are dealing with economic challenges might find it tough to afford things like air conditioning or take time off during extreme heat. The OFL's Enough is Enough Campaign which aligns with the Heat Stress Campaign, pushes to address economic disparities which is crucial for ensuring equitable protection against heat-related illnesses and ensuring that all workers have the support they need to stay safe and healthy.



Visibility and Representation: By participating in the campaign, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community can ensure that their specific needs are represented in the conversation around workplace safety. This includes advocating for gender-neutral restrooms, inclusive dress codes, and other policies that recognize the diversity of the workforce.

Community Support: The campaign also offers an opportunity for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to unite in solidarity with other vulnerable groups who are disproportionately affected by workplace heat stress, such as migrant workers and those in precarious employment who are also at greater risk from heat stress. It's an opportunity to emphasize the need for comprehensive measures that protect all employees from the adverse effects of rising temperatures and climate change. Together, we can push for proactive strategies that ensure the well-being of every member of the workforce.

What actions can 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals take in the Heat Stress Campaign?

Data Collection: Help us collect data by sharing real-life stories of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals affected by heat stress. Personal narratives can resonate deeply and provide valuable insights. Let us know about your experience where heat impacted your work and health, and the protections needed in your workplace. This data will help us improve our campaign and ensure it is built by workers for workers. You can share more details [here](#).

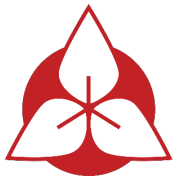
Help us Gather Petitions: Download our petition [here](#) and help us gather as many signatures as possible. Your support is crucial in demonstrating the widespread need for stronger heat stress protections and meaningful legislations for workers. By signing and sharing the petition with your network, you are amplifying our collective voice. If 10 workers each gather 100 signatures, that is 1000 signatures!

Advocate for Inclusive Policies: Send letters and emails to employers and local representatives to adopt inclusive policies and support legislation that protects workers from heat stress, emphasizing the impact on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. For example:

- **Gender-Neutral Dress Codes:** Advocate for gender-neutral dress codes that allow for lightweight, breathable clothing suitable for hot weather.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Encourage employers to offer flexible work hours or remote work options during extreme heat days.
- **Safe Spaces:** Advocate for designated cool-down areas where workers can rest and have access to a supply of ample water to hydrate.

Get Informed About Heat Stress: Check out resources on heat stress on the campaign's webpage and sign up to get involved with the heat stress campaign [here](#).

Attend a Training Session: Get introduced to all aspects of the campaign, including how to use the petition and other tools and become an organizer in the campaign. Look for upcoming training sessions on ofl.ca/events.



**ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR**

LAURA WALTON, President

AHMAD GAIED, Secretary-Treasurer

JACKIE TAYLOR, Executive Vice-President

Educate Co-workers: Work with your organization to establish how you can spread awareness among colleagues about the risks of heat stress and encourage them to participate in the campaign and prioritize their health. For example, health and safety meetings, equity committee meetings, lunch n' learns, etc.

Organize Workshops: Work with your organization to implement training programs or host educational workshops to teach people about the signs of heat stress, prevention methods, and proper response procedures.

Use the Heat Stress Toolkit: Use the [Heat Stress Toolkit](#) prepared by Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW), which includes a Heat Stress Calculator to assess risk levels and take action to protect yourself or your co-workers.

The Heat Stress Campaign is not just a matter of occupational health and safety; it's about ensuring equity, dignity, and respect for all workers, including those from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and other equity groups. By supporting this campaign, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals can help foster a work environment that is safe, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of a diverse workforce. It's an opportunity to unite under a common cause that benefits all and to advocate for changes that will protect workers now and, in the future, as we face the realities of climate change.

ml/COPE343

