

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BRANCH

Occupational Health Watch: July 2017

Valley Fever Awareness Month: Outdoor Workers at Risk

People who work outdoors in California's Central Valley and other locations, especially workers who dig or disturb soil, are at risk for Valley Fever. Valley Fever (also called coccidioidomycosis) is caused by inhaling fungal spores found in the soil in certain parts of California. It is a serious illness that can cause disability or even death.

The Occupational Health Branch investigates cases of Valley Fever linked to California worksites and offers technical assistance and education. OHB has updated its free online CME course on work-related coccidioidomycosis for health care providers. The course gives up-to-date statistics on cases in the U.S., provides information to assist providers in diagnosing and treating the illness, and includes recent scientific studies on coccidioidomycosis in the workplace.



Employers in affected areas can take steps to protect workers from breathing in the fungal spores that cause Valley Fever. These include controlling dust, providing worker training, and suspending outdoor work during heavy winds. New findings on Valley Fever prevention are highlighted in the recently published journal article, *Dust Exposure and Coccidioidomycosis Prevention Among Solar Power Farm Construction Workers in California*.

Photo: Workers disturbing soil for solar farm construction are at risk for Valley Fever.

Resources

Coccidioidomycosis: Update on Occupational Health Issues - free CME course

Work-related Valley Fever web page

CDPH Valley Fever web page

Email Occupational Health Watch (OHW@cdph.ca.gov) with feedback or change of address.

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