

Jericho Nursery

Jericho Nursery already provides year-round food, generous drinking water, shade, and cooling areas for every employee, especially for those who work out in the elements (heat or cold). It is, and always has been, our goal to make our workplace a safe, healthy, and pleasant environment for each of our employees. We value our employees and want to give them every tool they need to learn, grow, and succeed as individuals and in our industry.

While we do encourage our employees to take short breaks to cool off, get a drink of water, or get a reprieve from the heat (or cold), the suggestion of mandating 40-minute paid breaks for every 20 minutes of outside work is simply not sustainable for our industry or, in our opinion, for any job that requires employees to be outside during most of their work day. Our employees are moving around within the nursery constantly as their duties vary throughout each day. The employees who work in our yard seek out this kind of position because they're not interested in having a desk or an inside job.

We also already have procedures in place for emergency medical care protocols for employees and customers. Yet, we believe maintaining records of every break for every employee would be a cumbersome burden for the employees and for us. It would certainly not be sustainable long-term.

One additional note regarding the health context section, the statistics quoted here indicate that only 100 of the 900 heat-related emergency room visits were related to the workplace. Therefore, the percentage of work-related incidents does not seem to dictate such extreme legislation.

Again, Jericho will continue to make every reasonable effort to protect our employees and strive to continue providing a safe, healthy, and happy work environment. However, we do not support the 40-minute paid rest period for every 20 minutes of work in direct sunlight. The heat index referenced was not defined. This definition would be imperative if this legislation or any variation of it passes.