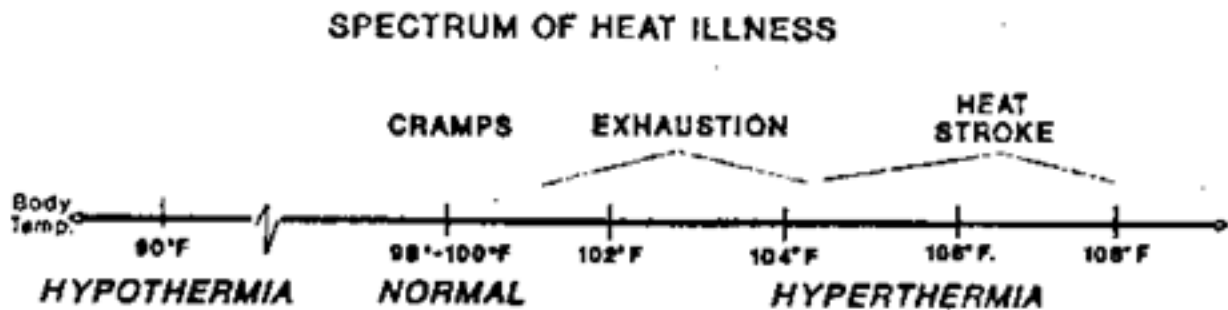


# Anti Idling Laws

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Anti idling laws are becoming more prevalent as time passes, add to them the high cost of fuel used to idle and you will find few companies or trucking organizations that will take on the states with the anti idling laws. While o/o's can buy their own apu units to keep their trucks warm or cool, we company drivers are for the most part left out to sweat or shiver.

Some companies are trying to put apus on their trucks or deep cell batteries that can run fans or small heaters but a lot of companies can not afford the cost of apu units or other technology. This puts the driver at risk through not being able to idle his truck due to laws or having to burn more fuel for their companies to stay comfortable while parked.

California had a reasonable anti idling law until January 1st of 08. The state did allow drivers to idle when in the sleeper resting or sleeping. Now, a driver is not allowed to idle their truck except for 5 minutes every hour. Many other states have this type of regulation where if it is above or below specified temperatures, a driver may idle their truck for so many minutes an hour. This type of thinking does not take into consideration that the driver is having to wake every hour and break their rest to at least attempt to stay a little comfortable.

The body regulates temperature through a process known as thermoregulation which is the ability of an organism to keep its body temperature within certain boundaries, even when temperature surrounding it is very different. Too low of a body temperature results in hypothermia which is dangerously low body temperature, below 95F. As people develop hypothermia, their abilities to think and move are often lost slowly. Too high of a body temperature results in hyperthermia which is dangerously high body temperature 102F+.

In researching this topic, I could find no studies done about truckers and the extremes in temperature they will have to endure when not being able to idle their trucks. I did however find studies from the military, fire departments and OSHA among others.

The fire department has this to say about how fast and how high a car can get too hot. From Firehouse.com: From a medical perspective, it must be understood that when a child or animal is locked in a vehicle, even when outside temperatures are fairly tolerable (a temperature of 90 degrees Fahrenheit, for example), the interior temperature of a closed vehicle can rapidly become lethal (over 135F) in a very few minutes.

The above is figured at 90F, if one is in Phoenix AZ in the summer where it can easily get to be

well over 100F adding in radiant heat from the asphalt and concrete, it would follow that the interior of a truck could reach 150F or more.

A Spectrum of Heat Illness graph ([www.safetycenter.navy.mil/OSH/ground/heatinjuryprev.htm](http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/OSH/ground/heatinjuryprev.htm)) from the US Navy is interesting because it tells of the effects of the different temperatures can have. Notice the body temperature where hypothermia starts. The type and number of heat injuries anticipated changes with environmental and physical factors. The spectrum of heat illnesses ranges from mild to severe as body temperature increases.

OSHA has identified the effects of extreme temperatures on workers, but not in relation to trucking. Notice what the effects of hypothermia and hyperthermia are, loss of concentration and difficulty focusing on a task for hyperthermia, for hypothermia: loss of ability to do complex motor functions, lethargy and mild confusion, and those are the first signs of it!

Hypothermia can occur not only in freezing temperatures but also is common among the elderly who live in cold houses says OSHA. What about a driver in a cold truck? Can the effects on the human body be safe for truckers to chance?

Saving the company money by not idling the truck in today's economy is important as is slowing the pollution caused supposedly by idling trucks. But is it worth the risk to a driver's health or ability to rest properly so they can do their job safely? We hear and see many regulations being passed touting driver health and public safety while these same states and groups are supporting anti idling laws....could it be that they are talking out of both sides of their mouth or are just looking for quick fixes to long existing problems? I think so.