



September 16, 2023

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington D.C. 20530-0001

Re: Request for Investigation of Forced Agricultural Labor at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Dear Mr. Attorney General,

We write to ask the United States Department of Justice to investigate Louisiana’s Department of Public Safety and Corrections (LDOC) under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12134, and its implementing regulations, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35. LDOC discriminates against persons incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (LSP or Angola) because of their disabilities.

At Angola, LDOC requires nearly all incarcerated men, including those with obvious disabilities and serious medical conditions, to engage in manual agricultural labor known as the “Farm Line.” Incarcerated people are forced to work in extreme heat and humidity, without basic safety gear or modern agricultural equipment—even though the State has that equipment—under threat of serious harm if their work is unsatisfactory. The combination of these intolerable and obviously dangerous conditions subjects incarcerated people with disabilities to the substantial risk of serious psychological and physical harm, including life-threatening heat-related disorders due to their exposure to extremely dangerous heat indices.

LDOC discriminates against individuals with disabilities, in violation of the ADA, by:

- Failing to provide individuals with disabilities with reasonable accommodations, including permanent no-duty statuses and reassignment to appropriate jobs that afford them an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from LDOC’s programs, 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(a);
- Failing to reasonably modify LDOC policies, practices, or procedures where necessary to avoid discrimination against individuals with disabilities, 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(7); and

- Denying qualified individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from its services, programs, or activities, 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(a).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Under Title II of the ADA, no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity. 42 U.S.C. § 12132; 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(a). LDOC is a public entity. 42 U.S.C. § 12131(1)(B); 28 C.F.R. § 35.104. Title II authorizes the United States to investigate complaints, make findings of fact and conclusions of law, and attempt to secure voluntary compliance where violations are found. 42 U.S.C. § 12133; 28 C.F.R. pt. 35, subpt. F.

INTRODUCTION

Built on the grounds of former slave plantations, the Louisiana State Penitentiary was—and remains—known as “Angola,” reportedly because the “best” enslaved people came from that African country. Today, Angola is an 18,000-acre penal plantation, larger than the island of Manhattan.

Every day, the State subjects incarcerated men to cruel, inhuman, and degrading forced labor at Angola. Overseen by armed guards known as “freemen,” these individuals—most of whom are Black—must walk or ride into the fields, sometimes carrying hoes and shovels, to dig ditches and pick plantation crops. Some are paid two cents an hour for their labor. Many are paid nothing at all. They are forced to work in extreme heat and humidity, without basic safety gear or modern agricultural equipment—even though the State has that equipment—under threat of serious harm if their work is unsatisfactory. This labor serves no legitimate penological or institutional purpose. It is purely punitive, designed to “break” incarcerated men and ensure their submission.

The Farm Line is particularly and obviously dangerous during the summer months, when the heat index in the Angola fields regularly reaches into the “danger” and “extreme danger” zones. The Louisiana Department of Health has warned that “heat exposure is intensifying as the frequency, severity, and duration of extreme heat events increase due to climate change.”¹ These changes are particularly concerning in Louisiana, which experiences some of the highest average summer temperatures in the nation. The combination of these intolerable and obviously dangerous conditions subject putative class members to the substantial risk of serious psychological and physical harm, including life-threatening heat-related disorders.

These health risks are particularly acute for individuals with disabilities, who should be excused from manual agricultural labor but are not. People with certain chronic health conditions, or who are taking certain medications, have a decreased ability to regulate their body temperatures, or “thermoregulate.” These men are *still* forced to work the Farm Line, notwithstanding their increased

¹ **Exhibit 1**, Louisiana Department of Health, *Heat-Related Illness in Louisiana: Review of Emergency Department and Hospitalization Data from 2010-2020*, 4 (March 2023), available at https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/lah/HRI_in_Louisiana_from_2010-2020.pdf.

risk of illness and injury. They suffer severe injuries, unnecessary pain, loss of function, and psychological distress because of the State’s failure to accommodate their disabilities and deliberate indifference to their serious medical needs.

There is no way to make the Farm Line safe. It is inherently dangerous, both physically and psychologically. It must end.

FACTS

A. Louisiana’s transition from mass enslavement to mass incarceration

Forced agricultural labor at the Angola plantation is nothing new. After the formal abolition of chattel slavery in 1865, Louisiana turned to the criminal legal system to “get[] things back as near to slavery as possible.”² The legislature expanded its discriminatory Black Codes, which subjected Black people to criminal prosecution for everyday behavior like loitering, breaking curfew, vagrancy, and not carrying proof of employment. As a result, the prison population grew exponentially, providing the State with a captive workforce at low and sometimes no cost.

Profit—not rehabilitation, retribution, or deterrence—was the goal of Louisiana’s penal system. Governor William Heard reportedly observed that the State was engaged not only in “the handling of a large prison as such, but in the establishment of a great industrial and business enterprise.”³ To that end, the State concentrated incarcerated labor on agricultural production.

By the mid-1920s, Angola was among the largest penal plantations in the United States. By 1940, people incarcerated at Angola produced agricultural products worth \$1.3 million (about \$28 million in today’s dollars).⁴ The State developed other prison industries—including a sugar mill, cannery, and slaughterhouse—to support its lucrative agricultural operations. Even as Louisiana became increasingly urban, its prison system remained focused on the cultivation and sale of agricultural commodities.

Meanwhile, the State continued to incarcerate Black people at disproportionate rates. Jim Crow laws, rooted in Black Codes, ensured a steady supply of incarcerated Black workers. The legislature “increased penalties for crimes, reduced the amount of time off prisoners could earn for good behavior, and cut back on the number of people being paroled[.]”⁵ By the early 1980s, Louisiana was a national leader in incarceration. In 2023, it still is.

² Andrea C. Armstrong, *Slavery Revisited in Penal Plantation Labor*, 35 *Seattle U. L. Rev.* 869, 902 (2012) (citing William M. Wiecek, *Emancipation and Civic Status: The American Experience, 1865-1915* in *THE PROMISES OF LIBERTY: THE HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF THE THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT*, 84 (Tsisis, ed., 2010)).

³ Mark T. Carleton, *Politics and Punishment: The History of the Louisiana State Penal System*, 94 (Louisiana State University Press, 1971).

⁴ Armstrong (2012) at 905-06 (citing *Prison Labor in the United States*, 53 *MONTHLY LAB. REV.* 578, 588 (1941)).

⁵ William P. Quigley, *Louisiana Angola Penitentiary: Past Time to Close*, 19 *LOY. J. PUB. INT. L.* 163, 209 (2018).

B. Angola's physical plant

Angola occupies a 28-square-mile area. The plantation is divided into several compounds. The Main Prison complex consists of the East Yard and the West Yard. The East Yard has 16 minimum and medium custody dormitories and one maximum custody extended lockdown cellblock known as the “dungeon.” The dungeon houses long-term extended-lockdown prisoners, in-transit administrative segregation prisoners, inmates who need mental health attention, and protective-custody inmates. The Main Prison complex includes approximately eight dormitories and four cellblocks, or disciplinary segregation cells.

Individuals serving disciplinary time in the cellblocks and lockdown units have extremely limited human interaction. The extreme isolation, deprivation of stimuli, and severe punishments all work to create a significant risk of harm to the mental and physical health of people incarcerated at Angola.

Angola also has several “out camps.” Camp C includes eight minimum and medium custody dormitories, one administrative segregation and working cellblock, and one extended lockdown cellblock. Farm Line 15, among others, operates out of Camp C. Camp D has similar features to Camp C, but without an extended lockdown cellblock. Farm Lines 15b, 24, and 25, among others, operate out of Camp D.

C. LDOC's operation of the Farm Line

Prison Enterprises, the business arm of LDOC, directs the agricultural program at Angola. It employs 800 to 1,000 incarcerated people in various industrial, service, and agricultural positions. As of 2019, nearly 30 percent of Prison Enterprises' incarcerated workforce were laboring in the fields. Prison Enterprises also sells incarcerated goods and labor to state, parish, and local governments and non-profit organizations. It operates like a business, though it must also follow all guidelines set forth by regulatory agencies, including the Office of State Procurement.

In 2021 and 2022, incarcerated men forced to work under the direction of Prison Enterprises planted, grew, and harvested nearly 3,000 acres of wheat, corn, soybeans, cotton, and grain sorghum at Angola. Prison Enterprises used some of those crops to feed its livestock and flight birds, but most were sold on the open market.⁶

By policy and practice, nearly every person who is transferred to Angola is assigned to the Farm Line at some point. After working in the field and remaining without a disciplinary write-up for 90 days, an incarcerated person can request a job change through his unit Classification Officer. People who apply for a job change are routinely rejected, despite having perfect disciplinary records. Even after reassignment, a person who receives a disciplinary write-up may be sent back to the Farm Line

⁶ Prison Enterprises, *Agriculture*, <http://www.prisonenterprises.org/agriculture/>.

as punishment. People have been transferred to the Farm Line by the Disciplinary Board and by individual prison administrators following disciplinary infractions.

The Farm Line has no penological or institutional purpose. Many daily tasks assigned to incarcerated men on the Farm Line are designed to enforce powerlessness. For instance, people imprisoned at Angola have been forced to dig and refill holes. Some must “goose-pick,” or pull blades of grass by hand. This definitionally pointless labor—extracted under threat of further punishment and serious harm—is humiliating and degrading. It is arbitrary and traumatic. An exercise of power, the Farm Line systematically treats individuals imprisoned at Angola as deserving of little, if any, dignity.

The Farm Line is not calculated to lead to gainful future employment, as the State has projected agriculture “to have a decrease in future employment.”⁷ Prison Enterprises loses money because of its inefficient and outdated work methods, intentionally pointless labor, and reluctance to reclassify incarcerated people to jobs that offer more valuable work skills.

People incarcerated at Angola must work at least three years before they are eligible for compensation, also called “incentive pay.” Then—after three years of labor—they may be paid \$0.02 an hour for their work, no matter the position, for at least six months.⁸ Louisiana has among the lowest incentive pay rates for incarcerated people working in correctional industries. Prison Enterprises pays all incentive wages in the State’s prisons. Prison Enterprises or LDOC Secretary James LeBlanc could pay higher rates if they chose.⁹

Some incarcerated people can opt for “good time” credits to reduce the length of their sentences—two days for every day worked—instead of receiving incentive pay. Others work in exchange for basic necessities, like extra food.

Incarcerated people are left with even less earned income because the State charges exorbitant rates for necessities like food, hygiene products, warm clothing, medications, and medical care. Angola’s canteen, or store, is the only approved method for incarcerated people to purchase goods from the outside on a daily basis. Prison Enterprises buys canteen items in bulk, marks those items up by approximately 20%, and then resells them to correctional facilities. Then, the correctional facilities charge another 33.3% markup on those items. From 2021 to 2022, Prison Enterprises conducted more than \$30.5 million in industry, agriculture, and retail sales combined. Nearly 35% of that sum—more than \$10.5 million—was from sales to canteens that incarcerated people and their families depend on.

⁷ See Louisiana Legislative Auditor, Performance Audit Services, “Prison Enterprises – Evaluation of Operations (May 1, 2019) at 3, 9 (hereinafter, “Legislative Audit”), available at <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/6430079/Louisiana-Legislative-Auditor-Prison-Enterprises.pdf>.

⁸ LDOC Department Regulation No. AM-C-1 Fiscal Management - Offender Funds, Offender Incentive Pay and Other Wage Compensation (September 12, 2021) at 3.

⁹ See La. R.S. § 15:873.

D. LDOC’s administration of the Farm Line subjects all incarcerated people to a significant risk of serious harm

LDOC threatens incarcerated people with serious harm—including confinement in the dungeon—to prevent them from challenging the unsafe nature of their compulsory fieldwork assignments. Pursuant to Angola’s disciplinary matrix, failure to perform compulsory work with “reasonable speed and efficiency” could result in five days of “disciplinary detention,” forfeiture of 15 days of good time, two weeks of confinement, and/or inability to earn incentive wages for three months. In practice, “failing to perform work with compulsory speed and efficiency” encompasses a wide range of benign behavior. “Aggravated” work offenses include refusing to work, asking to go to segregation rather than work, disobeying repeated instructions as to how to perform work assignments (even if the instruction makes a person unsafe), and “[f]alling far short of fulfilling reasonable work quotas.”¹⁰

Disciplinary infractions can also result in placement in disciplinary or solitary confinement for 30 days for first offense and 180 days for a third offense. Individuals in disciplinary confinement are deprived of their personal property and contact with others. They are allowed out of their cells for one hour daily to shower or exercise in a small, kennel-like enclosure.

LDOC has imposed indefinite segregation in response to nonviolent and minor rule violations, including failure to complete a job assignment. The risks of noncompliance include losing crucial connections with friends and family, losing access to essential food, privileges, recreation, and freedom of movement. These conditions are dehumanizing, authoritarian, and punitive. This ensures that Angola is not only a painful place in which to live, but that the administration of its agricultural program is inherently coercive.

THE FARM LINE IS INHERENTLY AND OBVIOUSLY DANGEROUS

Every person incarcerated at Angola forced to work in the fields is at substantial risk of serious physical and psychological harm due to their extensive and continued exposure to high temperatures and heat indices during the summer months in Louisiana. This is especially true for people with medical or mental health conditions that make them more susceptible to heat-related injuries, or who are taking certain medications that adversely affect their body’s ability to thermoregulate.

A. Extreme heat and humidity in Angola’s fields

The science is clear that prolonged exposure to high heat places people – even younger and healthier people – at serious risk of death or permanent physical injury. The risk of heat-related illness accelerates sharply when the heat index exceeds 88°F.

The temperature in the Angola fields regularly rises above 95°F and the relative humidity regularly exceeds 92%, according to local weather data tracked by the National Weather Service (NWS). By another measure, the heat index—i.e. the apparent temperature, which measures how hot

¹⁰ La. Admin. Code tit. 22, pt. I § 341(I), (K) (2023).

it *feels*—regularly reaches into the “danger” and “extreme danger” zones, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the NWS.

The New Orleans/Baton Rouge office of the NWS, which covers Angola, issues “heat advisories” when the heat index reaches 108°F or when the temperature reaches 103°F. The NWS issues “excessive heat warnings” if the heat index reaches 113°F or if the temperature reaches 105°F.¹¹ An excessive heat warning indicates that “extreme heat and humidity will significantly increase the potential for heat-related illnesses, particularly for those working or participating in outdoor activities.”¹²

According to the NWS, Angola’s heat index qualified for an excessive heat warning on 97 days between May 1 and September 14, 2023.¹³ LDOC has forced individuals with disabilities to work on the Farm Line during that period.

B. The impact of extreme heat and humidity on the human body

Thermoregulation is the process by which the human body maintains its temperature within a safe physiological range, in response to internal and external thermal stimuli. The inability to properly thermoregulate impairs the function of multiple bodily systems, including the nervous system, pulmonary system, cardiovascular system, gastrointestinal system, and kidney function. Certain medical conditions and pharmaceutical agents may impair these critical thermoregulation processes. Any medication that limits vasodilation or sweat gland function will limit the ability to thermoregulate in the heat.

C. Heat-related disorders and heat stroke

Heat-related disorders occur when the body’s temperature control system is overloaded, and the body is unable to adequately dissipate heat. The term “heat stress” refers to environmental conditions that cause the body’s thermoregulatory systems to engage and enhance heat loss from the body

The body’s safe physiologic range is typically a set point of plus or minus 0.8°F range around 98.6°F. The risk for heat stroke and heat-related disorders increases sharply when the heat index exceeds 88°F. Heat-related disorders include heat syncope (fainting), heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

¹¹ NWS LIX - Watch, Warning, Advisory Criteria, National Weather Service, https://www.weather.gov/lix/wwa_criteria#Heat%20Products.

¹² Janel Loehrke and George Petras, *How to Keep Cool and Recognize the Warnings Signs of Heatstroke*, USA TODAY (June 29, 2023), available at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/graphics/2023/06/28/heat-exhaustion-heat-stroke-symptoms-treatment/70357416007/>.

¹³ See **Exhibit 2**, Chart of heat indices at Angola, May 1, 2023 through September 14, 2023 (compiled from data from the National Weather Service).

Heat exhaustion results when heat stress begins to overwhelm the ability of the body to dissipate heat. A person suffering from heat exhaustion may feel chilled despite the heat. They can also feel light-headed, thirsty, nauseous, weak, faint, or dizzy, or have an unsteady gait. Their heartbeat is rapid, and they may also experience muscle aches (myalgias), headaches, or abdominal cramps.

Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency caused by persistent heat stress and inadequate dissipation of heat from the body. It commonly occurs when a person is engaged in physically strenuous activity in a high heat index and hot environment. Heat stroke is defined as an elevation of body temperature above 105.5°F, along with an alteration of mental status. The altered mental status could be subtle, manifesting as inappropriate behavior or impaired judgment, or it could include confusion, delirium, and seizures. The symptoms of heat stroke—including altered mental status, slurred speech, and irritability—can be misinterpreted as misbehavior, rather than the physiological response to the excessive heat.

Heat stroke carries a significant risk of death and permanent disability, including the failure of multiple organ systems and permanent neurological damage, if emergency treatment is not provided. Heat stroke may occur without warning when thermoregulation fails. Heat stroke can occur in persons who have never complained about heat before. The rapid onset of heat stroke has important implications: even frequent observations of persons at high risk of heat stroke may not give adequate warning of impending collapse.

D. People with certain disabilities are at a higher risk of heat-related illness.

All people, including healthy people with no known medical problems, are at risk for heat-related disorders during persistent exposure to a heat index above 88° F. However, certain people are at greater risk of heat-related disorders. This includes (a) people with chronic illnesses or medical conditions that impair thermoregulation; (b) people with psychiatric or mental health disorders; and/or (c) people taking drugs or medications that impair thermoregulation. People who fall into more than one of these categories are at an even higher risk of injury.

People with chronic illnesses, disabilities, or medical conditions such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, pre-diabetes, obesity, and respiratory diseases like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are much more likely to succumb to heat stroke when under heat stress due to their body's inability to fully thermoregulate.

People with psychiatric disabilities or mental health disorders are at increased risk of heat stroke and heat-related disorders because they may have impaired behavioral responses to heat stress. People with mental illness may not have the ability to reason, take precautions, or help themselves during a period of heat stress. People suffering from heat disorder must be able to express themselves and have the cognitive awareness and interpersonal skills to ask for help. People who suffer from depression or anxiety may be unable to communicate well with others, or may experience apathy and inability to take on and overcome challenging circumstances, during times of physiologic heat stress.

Certain medications that impair the body's ability to dissipate heat, circulate blood, or interfere with salt and water balance increase the risk of heat stroke and heat-related disorders. Medications that impair vasodilation and sweating – the primary processes of thermoregulation – will place persons at greater risk of heatstroke and heat-related disorders.

Many, if not most, medications used to treat mental illness increase the risk of heat-related health problems. Antipsychotic, antidepressant, and anticholinergic medications all impair the body's ability to perspire, and hence cool itself off. For instance, Lithium causes significant fluid loss that can exacerbate heat-related health problems. And Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), which are prescribed for people suffering depression, decrease its ability to respond to and regulate the body's temperature.

Drugs used to prevent or treat cardiovascular disease, known as Beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, and diuretics, depress cardiac function, or cause dehydration, impair cardiac output and place persons at greater risk of heat stroke and heat-related illness. Even common nasal decongestants, antihistamines, and over-the-counter cold remedies can cause narrowing of the blood vessels, or vasoconstriction, which inhibits the loss of heat from the body.

At Angola, incarcerated men with these disabilities and/or who take these medications are nonetheless forced to work the Farm Line during periods of extreme heat. LDOC discriminates against these individuals by failing to provide them with reasonable accommodations, including permanent no-duty statuses and reassignment to appropriate jobs that afford them an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from LDOC's programs.

E. Adverse health outcomes due to excessive heat exposure are well-known and entirely preventable.

The State is well aware of the dangers of heat exposure at Angola.¹⁴ In 2013, a federal judge found that heat conditions on Angola's death row constituted cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment and ordered the State to reduce and maintain the heat index to at or below 88 degrees. *Ball v. LeBlanc*, 792 F.3d 584, 598 (5th Cir. 2015) (citing *Ball v. LeBlanc*, F. Supp. 2d 639, 689 (M.D. La. 2013)).

INDIVIDUAL ALLEGATIONS

Nate Walker has been incarcerated at Angola since 2009.¹⁵ Mr. Walker is an individual with a disability under the ADA.¹⁶ He has high blood pressure, glaucoma, thyroid cancer, heart arrhythmia,

¹⁴ See, e.g., Julia O'Donoghue, *Louisiana Prison Officials Push for Air Conditioning After Fighting Lawusit*, WWNO (Mar. 22, 2022), <https://www.wwno.org/law/2022-03-22/louisiana-prison-officials-push-for-air-conditioning-after-fighting-lawsuit> (Secretary LeBlanc discussing how the high temperatures and lack of air conditioning in Louisiana's prisons contributes to staffing issues).

¹⁵ See **Exhibit 3**, Declaration of Nate Walker at ¶ 2.

¹⁶ 42 U.S.C. § 12102; 28 CFR 35.104; 29 U.S.C. § 705(9)(A)-(B).

and depression.¹⁷ Mr. Walker also has a family history of sickle-cell anemia.¹⁸ These conditions substantially limit Mr. Walker's major life activities, including his ability to stand, lift, bend, and otherwise engage in intense manual agricultural labor. LDOC prescribes Mr. Walker medications, including levothyroxine, to manage his disabilities.¹⁹

In an apparent recognition that Mr. Walker's disabilities and serious medical conditions seriously limit his major life activities, including his ability to thermoregulate, Defendants have provided Mr. Walker with a temporary duty status.²⁰ That status provides that, because Mr. Walker takes medications that cause heat-related side effects, his duty status from May to October is "regular duty with restrictions; indoors, no kitchen duty, no sports[.]" Mr. Walker is still forced to engage in intense manual agricultural labor at other times, including earlier this year when there were heat advisories. That work exceeds his strength and physical abilities, causes him unnecessary pain and suffering, and has significantly worsened his medically-serious pathological conditions. Through a request for an administrative remedy (ARP), Mr. Walker requested reasonable accommodations for his disabilities, including a permanent no-duty status.²¹ His request was denied.²²

Damaris Jackson has been incarcerated at Angola since 2002.²³ Mr. Jackson is an individual with a disability under the ADA.²⁴ He has high blood pressure, which is a physical impairment that substantially limits the functioning of his circulatory system.²⁵ Prison authorities know about Mr. Jackson's condition and have prescribed him medications for it, including valsartan.²⁶

Presently, Mr. Jackson works on Farm Line 25 with around 20 other incarcerated individuals.²⁷ He reports for work call-out around 6 a.m. on weekdays.²⁸ Mr. Jackson and others either walk or take a bus to the field to cultivate crops like squash, zucchini, and okra with their bare hands.²⁹ He works from around 7 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.³⁰ LDOC has not provided Mr. Jackson with tools or equipment necessary for safe field labor, such as proper gloves, protective work boots, sunscreen, sunglasses, and sunhats.³¹

For Mr. Jackson, like other individuals with disabilities, the heat and humidity in the fields place him at serious risk of harm because his physical disability, hypertension, impairs his body's

¹⁷ See Exhibit 3, Declaration of Nate Walker at ¶¶ 10-11.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.* at ¶ 10.

²⁰ *Id.* at ¶ 22.

²¹ *Id.* at ¶ 11.

²² *Id.*

²³ See **Exhibit 4**, Declaration of Damaris Jackson at ¶ 2.

²⁴ 42 U.S.C. § 12102; 28 CFR 35.104; 29 U.S.C. § 705(9)(A)-(B).

²⁵ 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(B); *see, e.g., Gogos v. AMS Mech. Sys., Inc.*, 737 F.3d 1170, 1173 (7th Cir. 2013) (holding that an episode of a blood-pressure spike is a disability covered by the ADA).

²⁶ See Exhibit 4, Declaration of Damaris Jackson, at ¶ 10.

²⁷ *Id.* at ¶ 6.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.* at ¶¶ 6-7.

³⁰ *Id.* at ¶ 6.

³¹ *Id.* at ¶ 7.

ability to thermoregulate. He has recurring instances of heat-related illness symptoms, including dehydration, lightheadedness, headaches, muscle cramps, and, dizziness.³² Mr. Jackson has also experienced chills, despite the extreme heat and humidity.³³ His symptoms are worse in high heat and humidity. Through a request for an administrative remedy (ARP), Mr. Jackson requested reasonable accommodations for his disability, including a permanent no-duty status.³⁴ His request was denied.³⁵

Kevias Hicks has been incarcerated at Angola since 2013.³⁶ Mr. Hicks is an individual with a disability under the ADA.³⁷ He has anxiety and depression, which are mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities including concentrating, thinking, and communicating.³⁸ Moreover, his mental impairments substantially limit a major bodily function—the operation of his brain.³⁹ Prison officials have prescribed him Elavil and Prozac to manage these mental conditions.⁴⁰ He is also prescribed an antihistamine for his allergies.⁴¹ Antidepressants such as Elavil, along with antihistamines, impair the body’s ability to thermoregulate, increasing Mr. Hicks’ susceptibility to heat-related illness.

Despite LDOC prescribing and administering this medication to Mr. Hicks, he is currently forced to work Farm Line 24/25 from 7 a.m. to around 11 or 11:30 a.m., even when there is a heat advisory in effect.⁴² Recently, he was forced to pick decaying watermelons using his hands.⁴³ When he has refused to work in the fields, prison officials have sent Mr. Hicks to the dungeon and cut off his access to phone calls and the canteen.⁴⁴

While working on the Farm Line, Mr. Hicks has repeatedly experienced lightheadedness, dizziness, muscle aches, and headaches.⁴⁵ At times his feet swell.⁴⁶ These symptoms are worse during periods of extreme heat and humidity. Through a request for an administrative remedy (ARP), Mr. Hicks requested reasonable accommodations for his disabilities, including a permanent no-duty status.⁴⁷

³² *Id.* at ¶ 9.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 12.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ See **Exhibit 5**, Declaration of Kevias Hicks at ¶ 2.

³⁷ 42 U.S.C. § 12102; 28 CFR 35.104; 29 U.S.C. § 705(9)(A)-(B).

³⁸ 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(A).

³⁹ 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(B).

⁴⁰ See **Exhibit 5**, Declaration of Kevias Hicks at ¶ 12.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.* at ¶ 4.

⁴³ *Id.* at ¶ 5.

⁴⁴ *Id.* at ¶¶ 8-9.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 6.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.* at ¶ 13.

Kendrick Stevenson has been incarcerated at Angola since 1999.⁴⁸ Mr. Stevenson is an individual with a disability under the ADA.⁴⁹ His medical conditions include ventricular tachycardia, high blood pressure, anxiety, and depression.⁵⁰ Anxiety and depression are mental impairments that substantially limit Mr. Stevenson’s major life activities—concentrating, thinking, and communicating—and the operation of his brain, a major bodily function.⁵¹ Prison officials have prescribed him an array of medications, including losartan, metformin, and naltrexone.⁵² Some of the medications LDOC has prescribed Mr. Stevenson impairs his body’s ability to thermoregulate.

Despite his numerous physical and mental health conditions, Mr. Stevenson is currently forced to work Farm Line 24/25.⁵³ Because of his disabilities, he has repeatedly experienced symptoms of heat-related illness, including dehydration, lightheadedness, dizziness, and painful muscle cramps in his back and arms.⁵⁴

Around August 2023, prison officials gave Mr. Stevenson a disciplinary violation for failing to work efficiently after he was forced to work in the fields wearing canvas tennis shoes.⁵⁵ This write-up led to disciplinary confinement, loss of canteen privileges for two weeks, and disqualification from eligibility for clemency. It caused Mr. Stevenson significant physical, emotional, and psychological distress.⁵⁶

Damion Thompson has been incarcerated at Angola since 2022.⁵⁷ Mr. Thompson is an individual with a disability under the ADA.⁵⁸ Mr. Thompson has nerve damage stemming from a gunshot wound.⁵⁹ His nerve damage is a physical impairment that substantially limits his major life activities, including standing, walking, and performing manual tasks.⁶⁰ He experiences acute pain when standing, walking, and squatting for prolonged periods.⁶¹ Mr. Thompson has been punished by prison officials for taking necessary breaks.⁶²

To prevent dehydration and fainting, Mr. Thompson has had to drink dirty water from a moldy cooler.⁶³ He frequently experienced dizziness and nausea during his time in the field.⁶⁴

⁴⁸ See **Exhibit 6**, Declaration of Kendrick Stevenson at ¶ 2.

⁴⁹ 42 U.S.C. § 12102; 28 CFR 35.104; 29 U.S.C. § 705(9)(A)-(B).

⁵⁰ See Exhibit 6, Declaration of Kendrick Stevenson at ¶ 10.

⁵¹ 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(A).

⁵² See Exhibit 6, Declaration of Kendrick Stevenson at ¶ 10.

⁵³ *Id.* at ¶ 6.

⁵⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 9.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 14.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ See **Exhibit 7**, Declaration of Damion Thompson at ¶ 2.

⁵⁸ 42 U.S.C. § 12102.

⁵⁹ See Exhibit 7, Declaration of Damion Thompson, at ¶ 17.

⁶⁰ 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(A).

⁶¹ See Exhibit 7, Declaration of Damion Thompson, at ¶ 17.

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Id.* at ¶ 7.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 18.

Around February of 2023, prison officials issued a disciplinary write-up to Mr. Thompson for refusing to work on the Farm Line. He was sentenced to disciplinary confinement in Camp D.⁶⁵ For most of the day, he is confined to a two-person cell.⁶⁶ He is allowed 30 minutes to shower or make phone calls, and approximately an hour for exercise.⁶⁷ Through a request for an administrative remedy (ARP), Mr. Thompson requested reasonable accommodations for his disability, including a permanent no-duty status.⁶⁸ His request was denied.⁶⁹

Christopher Bell has been incarcerated at Angola since June 2023.⁷⁰ Mr. Bell is an individual with a disability under the ADA.⁷¹ Despite his disability—a hernia—he was assigned to Farm Line 25 upon his arrival to Angola in June 2023.⁷² Mr. Bell’s hernia is a physical impairment that substantially impairs the operation of his digestive system and limits his major life activities such as bending and lifting.⁷³ Prison authorities have knowledge of his medical condition, as evidenced by multiple sick calls and documented no-duty statuses from the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center (Hunt) and the B.B. Rayburn Correctional Center (Rayburn).⁷⁴

Mr. Bell had a no-duty status at Hunt that restricted him from lifting weights exceeding 15 pounds. But at Angola, Mr. Bell was forced to lift and carry heavy bags of corn on the Farm Line. Unsurprisingly, this intense manual labor caused him severe pain.⁷⁵ Mr. Bell was also issued a no-duty status by Rayburn officials. That status, issued May 15, 2023, prevented Mr. Bell from bending, squatting, and lifting. It was ignored at Angola.⁷⁶ Mr. Bell has requested a duty status at Angola. He has been denied.⁷⁷

Patrick Ramirez has been incarcerated at Angola since 2014.⁷⁸ Mr. Ramirez is an individual with a disability under the ADA.⁷⁹ He has bipolar disorder and high blood pressure.⁸⁰ Bipolar disorder is a mental impairment that substantially limits Mr. Ramirez’s major life activities such as thinking, communicating, working, sleeping, and concentrating.⁸¹ Bipolar disorder also substantially limits a major bodily function, the operation of Mr. Ramirez’s brain.⁸² In recognition of these medical conditions, the prison prescribed him medications, including olanzapine, amlodipine, and

⁶⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 5.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ *Id.* at ¶ 20.

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ See **Exhibit 8**, Declaration of Christopher Bell, at ¶ 2.

⁷¹ 42 U.S.C. § 12102; 28 CFR 35.104; 29 U.S.C. § 705(9)(A)-(B).

⁷² See **Exhibit 8**, Declaration of Christopher Bell at ¶ 2.

⁷³ 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(A)-(B).

⁷⁴ See **Exhibit 8**, Declaration of Christopher Bell at ¶¶ 6-7.

⁷⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 6.

⁷⁶ *Id.* at ¶ 7.

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ See **Exhibit 9**, Declaration of Patrick Ramirez at ¶ 2.

⁷⁹ 42 U.S.C. § 12102; 28 CFR 35.104; 29 U.S.C. § 705(9)(A)-(B).

⁸⁰ See **Exhibit 9**, Declaration of Patrick Ramirez at ¶ 5.

⁸¹ 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(A).

⁸² 42 U.S.C. § 12102(2)(B).

hydroxyzine.⁸³ Some of these medications impair the body’s ability to thermoregulate, increasing Mr. Ramirez’s susceptibility to heat-related illness.

In apparent acknowledgment of his disabilities, the DOC issued Mr. Ramirez a “heat precaution” duty status exempting him from forced labor in the fields from May to October.⁸⁴ This is insufficient: Mr. Ramirez is vulnerable to reassignment to the field after his duty status expires.⁸⁵

When Mr. Ramirez has refused to work in the fields, prison officials have written him up, resulting in punishment ranging from disciplinary confinement, loss of access to communication, and restricted canteen access.⁸⁶ Through a request for an administrative remedy (ARP), Mr. Ramirez requested reasonable accommodations for his disabilities, including a permanent no-duty status.⁸⁷ His request was denied.⁸⁸

CONCLUSION

The State must end its shameful tradition of forcing incarcerated men, including those with disabilities, to work the fields in degrading and unsafe conditions. The Promise of Justice Initiative and Rights Behind Bars ask the Department of Justice to investigate the systemic violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are available to assist however possible.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lydia Wright

Lydia Wright

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⁸³ See Exhibit 9, Declaration of Patrick Ramirez at ¶ 5.

⁸⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 8.

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ *Id.* at ¶ 10.

⁸⁷ *Id.* at ¶ 7.

⁸⁸ *Id.*

Exhibits

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Exhibit 1 | Louisiana Department of Health, <i>Heat-Related Illness in Louisiana: Review of Emergency Department and Hospitalization Data from 2010-2020</i> (March 2023), https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/lah/HRI_in_Louisiana_from_2010-2020.pdf . |
| Exhibit 2 | Chart of heat indices at Angola, May 1, 2023 through September 14, 2023 (compiled from National Weather Service data) |
| Exhibit 3 | Declaration of Nate Walker |
| Exhibit 4 | Declaration of Damaris Jackson |
| Exhibit 5 | Declaration of Kevias Hicks |
| Exhibit 6 | Declaration of Kendrick Stevenson |
| Exhibit 7 | Declaration of Damion Thompson |
| Exhibit 8 | Declaration of Christopher Bell |
| Exhibit 9 | Declaration of Patrick Ramirez |

EXHIBIT 1

HEAT- RELATED ILLNESS IN LOUISIANA:

Review of Emergency Department and
Hospitalization Data from 2010–2020

March 2023



AUTHORS:

This report was prepared by the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Office of Public Health's (OPH) Occupational Heat-Related Illness Prevention Program in collaboration with Louisiana State University Health New Orleans' School of Public Health, Louisiana State University's Department of Geology and Anthropology, and the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes heat-related illness data for Louisiana residents and workers from 2010 through 2020. Heat-related illness data include information about patients in Louisiana who were treated in the emergency department (ED) or hospitalized with a diagnosis indicating heat exposure. Two sets of analyses were conducted: 1) all cases, and 2) cases who were working when exposed to heat. This report contributes to public health's capacity to monitor and assess the burden of heat on Louisianans.

Understanding variations in heat-related ED and hospital visits can inform and target public education programs and policy and prevention efforts, such as heat alert protocols and action plans.

MAJOR FINDINGS

ALL CASES

- ▶ On average, there were 2,700 heat-related ED visits and 260 hospitalizations every year in Louisiana. About 75% of ED visits and hospitalizations occurred during the summer.
- ▶ Black residents had higher rates than white residents: 1.5 times the rate of ED visits, and 1.4 times the hospitalization rate.
- ▶ Males accounted for 81% of ED visits and 87% of hospitalizations. The rate of ED visits for males was 4.5 times the female rate, and the male hospitalization rate was 7.8 times the female rate.
- ▶ Parishes with the highest hospitalization rates were clustered in the Northern part of the state; parishes with elevated ED visits were located in every part of the state.
- ▶ Individuals ages 20 to 39 accounted for 40% of all heat-related ED visits and had the highest rates, followed by individuals 40 to 59 years old.

WORKERS

- ▶ On average, there were 320 work-related ED visits and 20 work-related hospitalizations for heat-related illness every year in Louisiana. Approximately 12% of the workers were not Louisiana residents.
- ▶ Male workers accounted for 90% of ED visits and 96% of hospitalizations. Workers ages 34 years and younger had the highest rates of ED visits; the rate for heat-related hospitalizations among workers varied minimally by age.
- ▶ Black workers had higher ED and hospitalization rates than white workers: 1.5 times the rate of ED visits and 2 times the hospitalization rate.
- ▶ Parishes with the highest rates of occupational heat-related illness were clustered in the northwest and central parts of the state.



OVERVIEW

Every year in Louisiana, about 10 people die and thousands more are treated in emergency departments or hospitalized due to heat. Heat exposure is intensifying as the frequency, severity, and duration of extreme heat events increases due to climate change. These changes are of concern in Louisiana because the state experiences some of the highest average summer temperatures in the nation. Louisiana's hot summers are compounded by high humidity which worsens the impact of heat by impairing the body's ability to cool by evaporation.

The human body maintains an internal temperature within a very narrow range. Heat-related illness can occur when someone is exposed to high temperatures and his or her body is unable to cool itself sufficiently through sweating. Heat-related illness (or hyperthermia) is a broad term for conditions directly related to an increase in body temperature. These conditions occur along a continuum of severity ranging from mild cramps, swelling and rashes to heat exhaustion and life-threatening heat stroke. Heat also has indirect health impacts: it can exacerbate chronic conditions such as respiratory, cardiovascular, and kidney disease, increase injuries and accidents, and strain mental health.

Progression of Heat-Related Illness

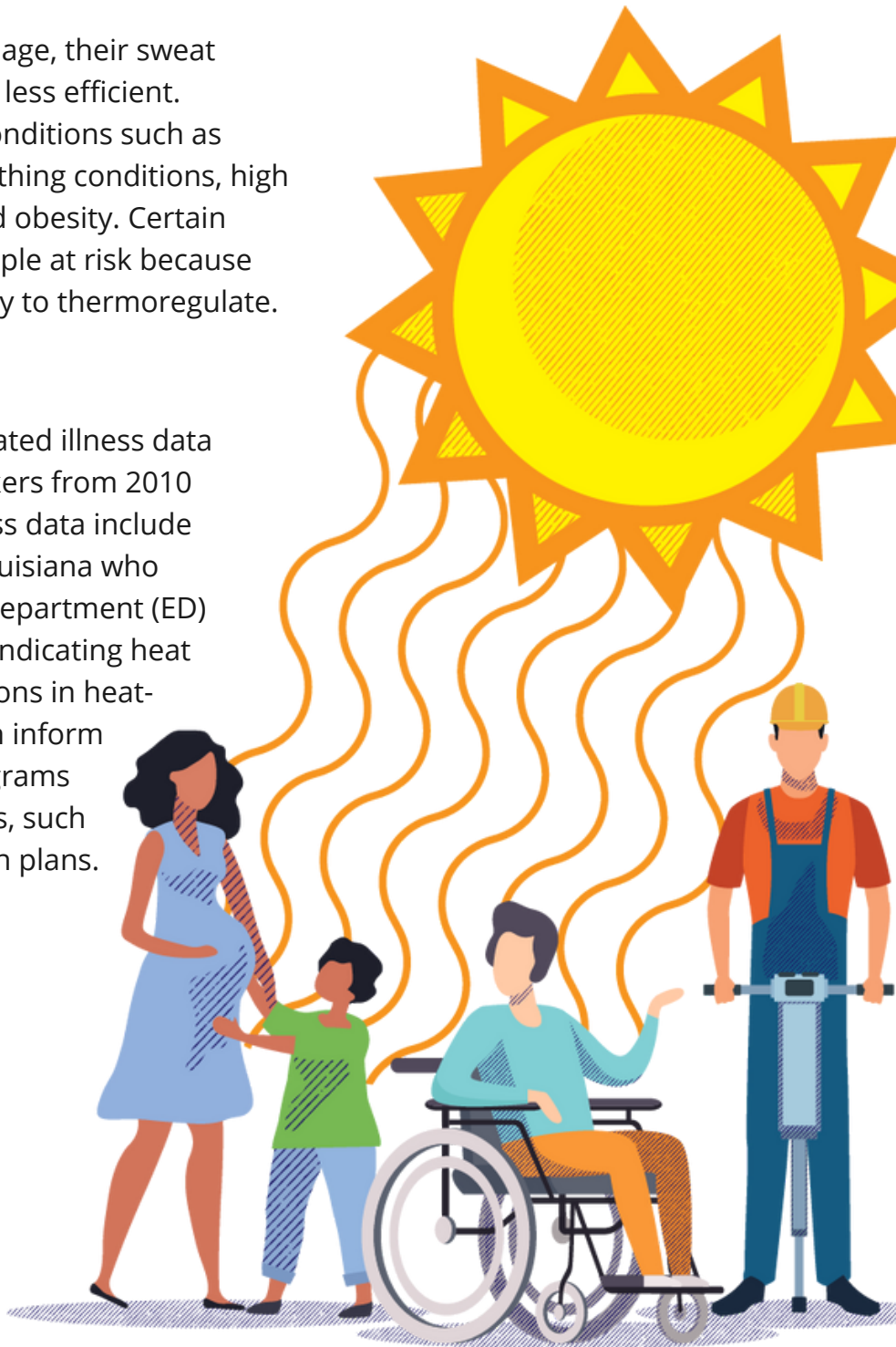
| Illness | Symptoms |
|-----------------|---|
| Heat Stroke | Confusion Altered mental status Slurred speech Loss of consciousness Seizures Very high body temperature Fatal if treatment delayed |
| Heat Exhaustion | Headache Nausea Dizziness Weakness Irritability |
| Heat Syncope | Fainting Dizziness/lightheadedness |
| Heat Cramps | Tightness or spasm of muscles |
| Heat Rash | Red clusters of pimples or small blisters |

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Anyone can develop heat-related illness, but some people are at greater risk.

- Workers in outdoor settings, and some indoor work settings without adequate climate-controlled environments.
- Infants and young children. They are sensitive to the effects of high temperatures and rely on others to control their environments.
- Pregnant women. They are under more bodily stress and are more likely to become dehydrated. Heat exposure can also contribute to premature birth, stillbirth, and lower infant birthweight.
- Older adults (65+). As people age, their sweat cooling mechanism becomes less efficient.
- People with chronic health conditions such as heart or kidney disease, breathing conditions, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity. Certain medications can also put people at risk because they interfere with their ability to thermoregulate.
- People who exercise outside.

This report summarizes heat-related illness data for Louisiana residents and workers from 2010 through 2020. Heat-related illness data include information about patients in Louisiana who were treated in the emergency department (ED) or hospitalized with a diagnosis indicating heat exposure. Understanding variations in heat-related ED and hospital visits can inform and target public education programs and policy and prevention efforts, such as heat alert protocols and action plans.



METHODS

DATA SOURCES

Data analyzed in this report are from ED and inpatient hospitalization billing records for all Louisiana hospitals, excluding Veterans Affairs and psychiatric hospitals. The Louisiana Hospital Association provided ED data, and LDH's Bureau of Health Informatics provided hospitalization data. ED and hospitalization data contain information regarding patient demographics (e.g., age, sex, race), treatment dates (e.g., date of admission, date of discharge), payment (e.g., primary payer, total costs), patient residence (e.g., parish, zip code), and all primary and secondary diagnoses classified according to the International Classification of Diseases, 9th Revision (ICD-9) or 10th Revision (ICD-10).

CASE SELECTION

Cases were selected for analysis if they were treated in the ED or hospitalized during 2010 through 2020 and had a primary or secondary diagnosis directly indicating heat exposure. Diagnoses include those for heat-related stroke, exhaustion, syncope, cramps, fatigue, and edema. (Appendix A: ICD codes Heat-Related Illness).

Cases who were working when they developed heat-related illness were flagged. Cases were considered work-related if workers' compensation paid the medical bill or the medical record contained a work-related diagnostic code (Appendix B: ICD codes Work-Relatedness).

RATE CALCULATIONS

Age-adjusted rates were calculated to determine differences by year, sex, age, race, and location (i.e., parish). Two sets of rate calculations were done: all cases followed by work-related cases. Non-Louisiana residents were included in annual case counts but were excluded from rate calculations because the denominators for rate calculations were Louisiana residents and workers.

Denominator data for rate calculations included the American Community Survey for Louisiana's total population and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey for Louisiana's employed population. Rates for all cases were age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population, and worker rates were adjusted to the 2000 U.S. worker population. Age-adjustment removes the influence of differing age distributions among groups, allowing for a more accurate comparison of rates.

HEALTH DATA LIMITATIONS

This report only includes information about individuals who had a diagnosis of heat-related illness listed on their medical record. This approach does not reflect the total burden of heat. Heat-related illness is underdiagnosed and underreported, and ascertainment can vary by time and place. In addition, heat can exacerbate chronic conditions, contribute to injuries such as a fall or trip, and have other indirect health impacts.

This report also underestimates work-related cases. Many workers do not have workers' compensation, they have it but do not use it, or the healthcare provider does not record the case as work-related on the medical record.

There was a data gap from October to December 2020 when ED data were not obtained.

TEMPERATURE DATA

Temperature data sources include the Iowa Environmental Mesonet's Daily Summary Data and the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program's Climate Trends tool.

The Daily Summary Data include daily observations from Louisiana's weather stations for maximum temperature (i.e., daytime highs), minimum temperature (i.e., overnight lows), and maximum apparent temperature (i.e., heat index). Temperature observation data were restricted to Louisiana's warm season: April through October. Apparent temperature (also known as the "feels like" temperature) includes both heat index and wind chill. Because the data were restricted to the warmer months, apparent temperature is considered heat index.



Average annual maximum and minimum temperatures and heat indices were calculated for the period 2010 through 2020 for Louisiana, and each of Louisiana's nine climate divisions. Parishes within each climate division share nearly homogenous characteristics regarding temperature, rainfall, and humidity. To facilitate review of data, Louisiana's nine climate divisions were combined into three Climate Divisions: North, Central, and South.

The Climate Trends Tool provides a comparative, annual analysis for average temperature at the state and climate division level. The tool uses long term averages calculated from the National Climatic Data Center's annual temperature datasets. Five-year moving averages were plotted in comparison to the long-term, historic average for the North, Central, and South climate divisions.

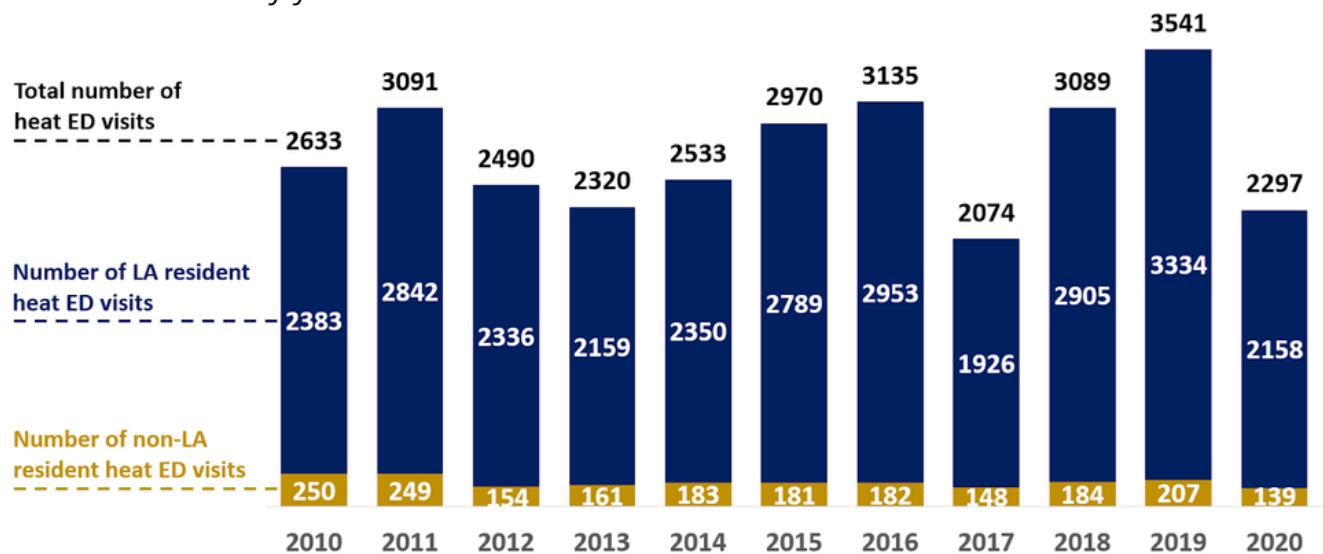


RESULTS

ANNUAL COUNTS AND RATES: ALL CASES

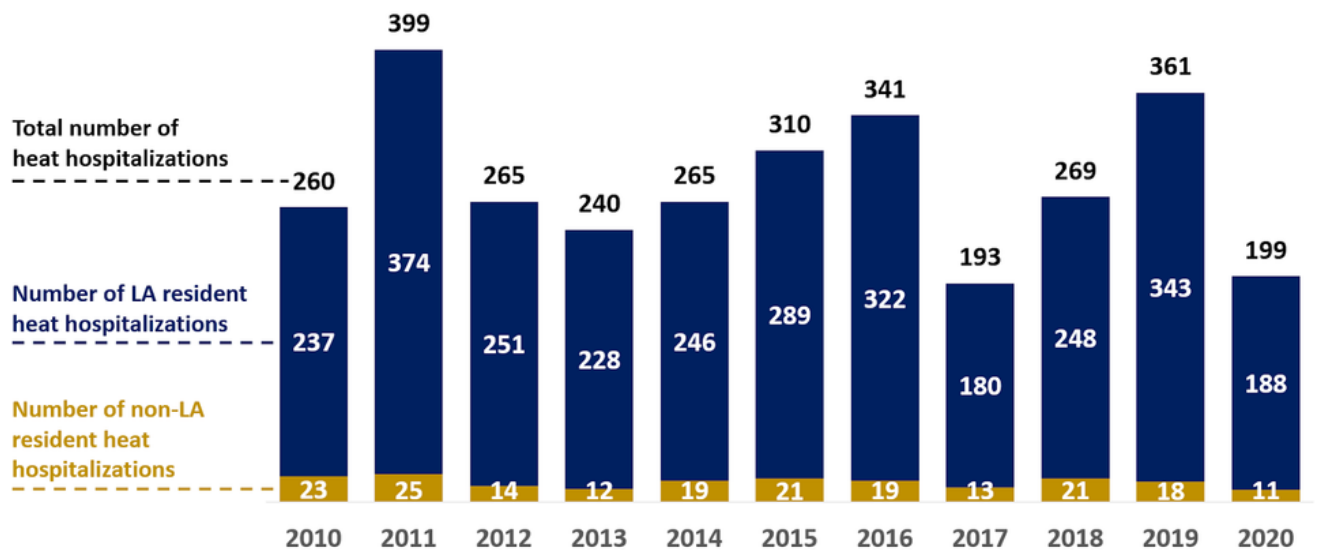
There was an annual average of 2,700 ED visits for heat-related illness.

Most of these ED visits were for Louisiana residents (93%). There were approximately 185 ED visits every year for non-Louisiana residents.



There was an annual average of 260 hospitalizations for heat-related illness.

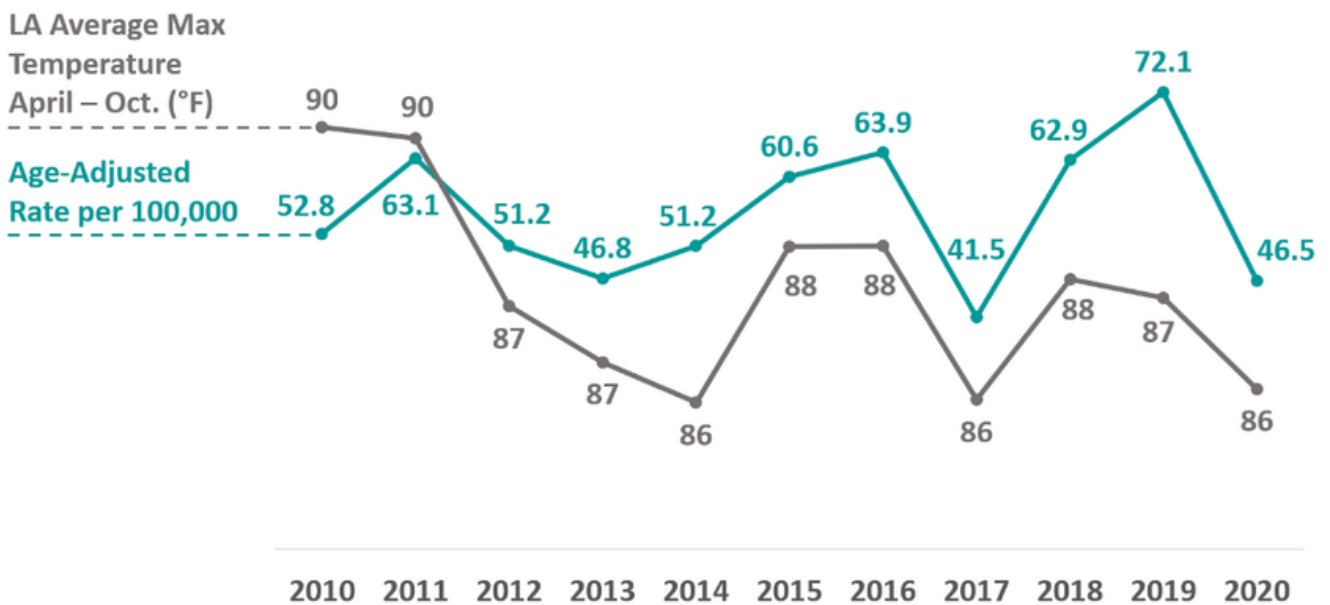
Heat-related hospitalization stays ranged from 1 to 90 days with an average stay of 3 days. Most of the hospitalizations were for Louisiana residents (94%).



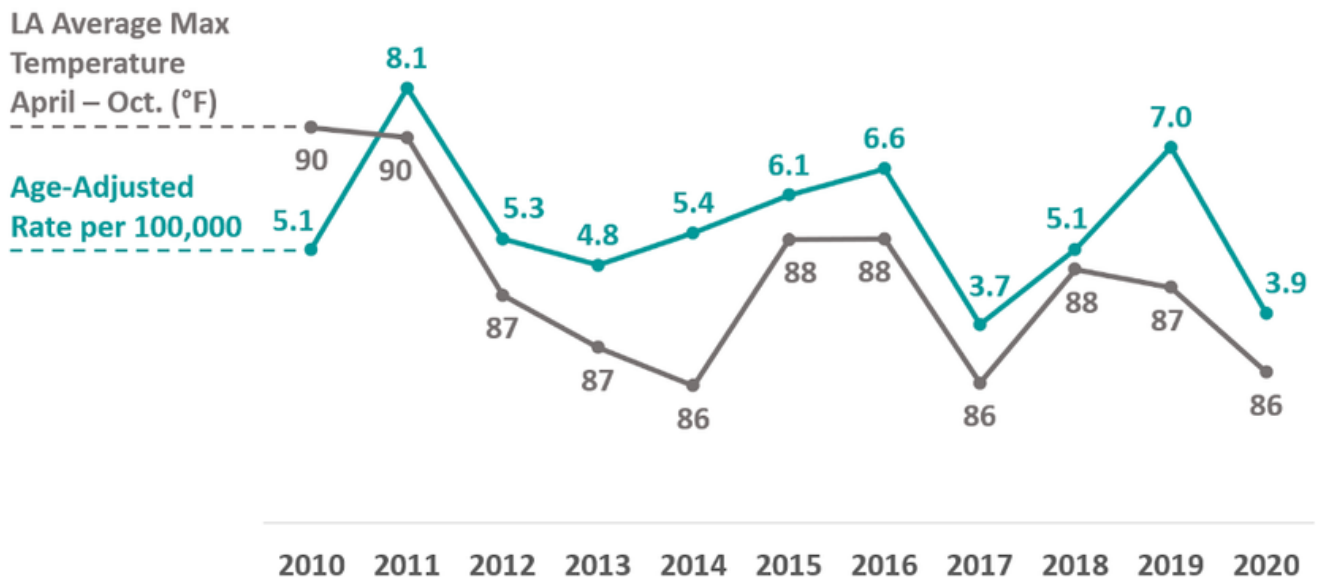
TEMPERATURE

Annual fluctuations in heat-related ED visits and hospitalizations generally corresponded to variations in temperature. The graphs below show the annual average maximum temperature, or daytime high temperature, for April through October and the age-adjusted rate of heat-related ED visits and hospitalizations for Louisiana residents.

ED visits increased as temperatures increased.

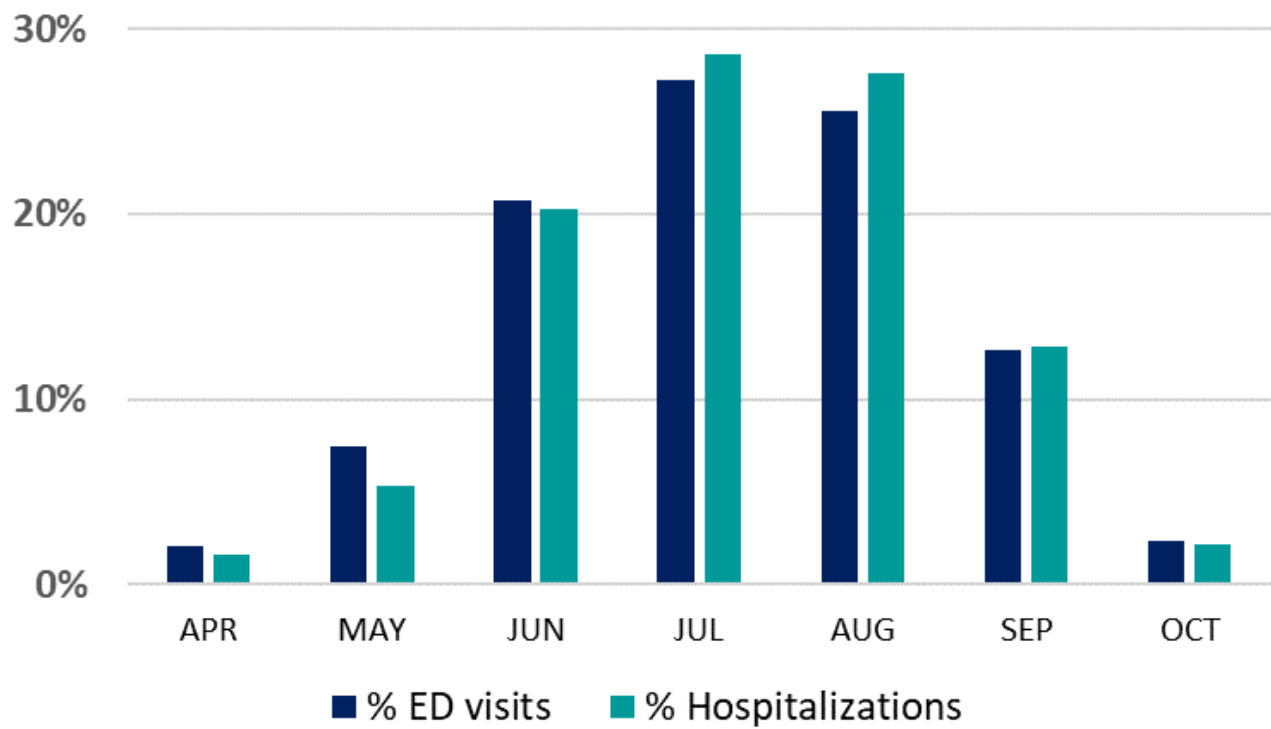


Hospitalizations increased as temperatures increased.



MONTH

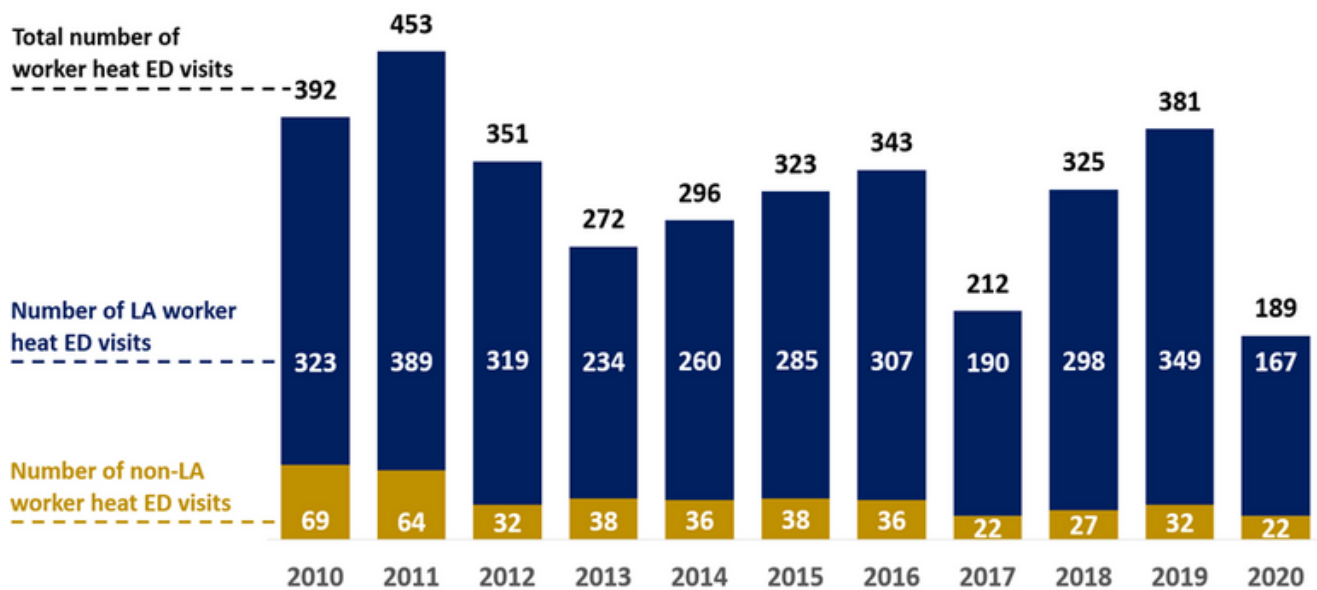
Most cases occurred during the summer months, peaking in July. Warm spring and fall temperatures contributed to almost one-quarter of all ED visits and hospitalizations. As the climate warms, more cases will occur in the fall and spring months.



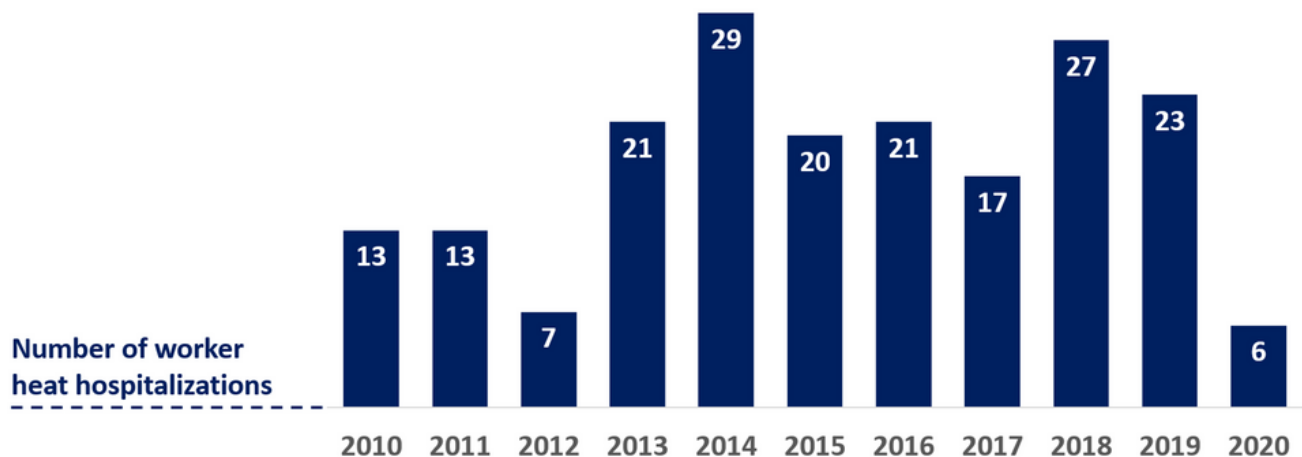
ANNUAL COUNTS AND RATES: WORKERS

Heat is a well-recognized occupational hazard and workers are one of the most at-risk populations because their exposure and responses are largely controlled by their job requirements and employer. About one-quarter of Louisiana's workforce is at risk of heat exposure due to outdoor and physically demanding work in industries such as agriculture, construction, landscaping, transportation, utilities, and some manufacturing. Indoor workers who work in inadequately climatized settings are also at risk.

There was an annual average of 320 work-related ED visits for heat-related illness. Approximately 12% of these visits were for workers who were not Louisiana residents.

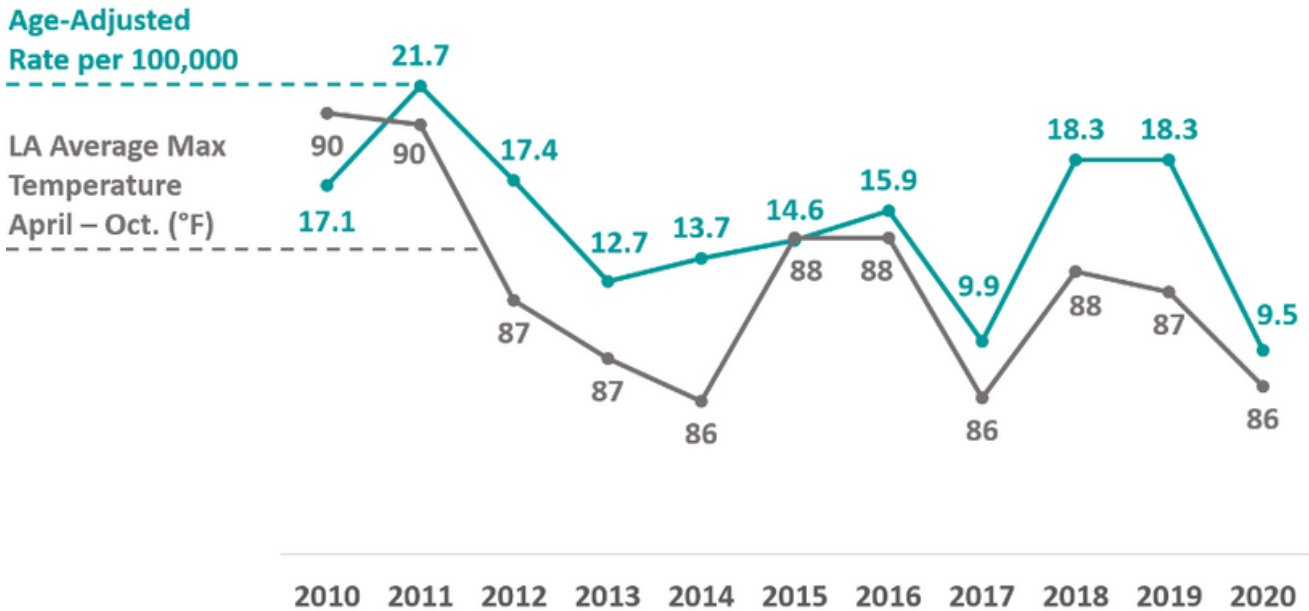


There was an annual average of 20 work-related hospitalizations for heat-related illness. About 11% of these workers were not Louisiana residents. Because of small numbers, the graph only displays total counts.

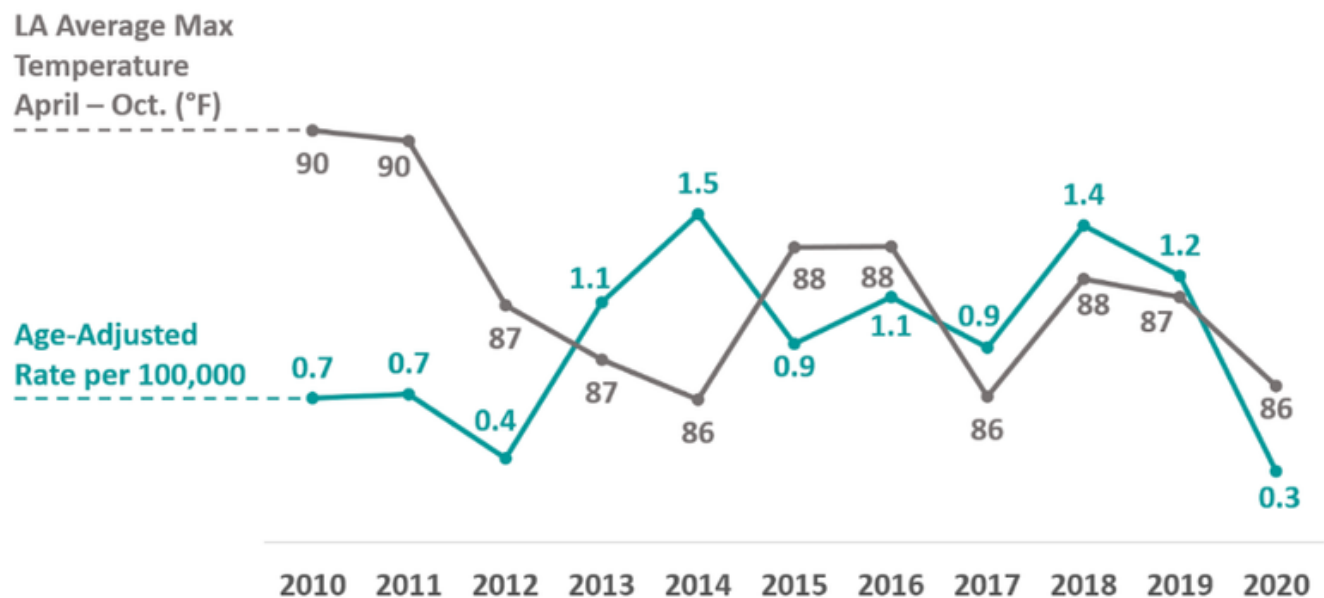


TEMPERATURE

The fluctuation in work-related ED visits corresponded with variations in temperature. The graph below shows the annual average maximum temperature, or daytime high temperature, for April through October and the age-adjusted rate of heat-related ED visits for Louisiana workers.



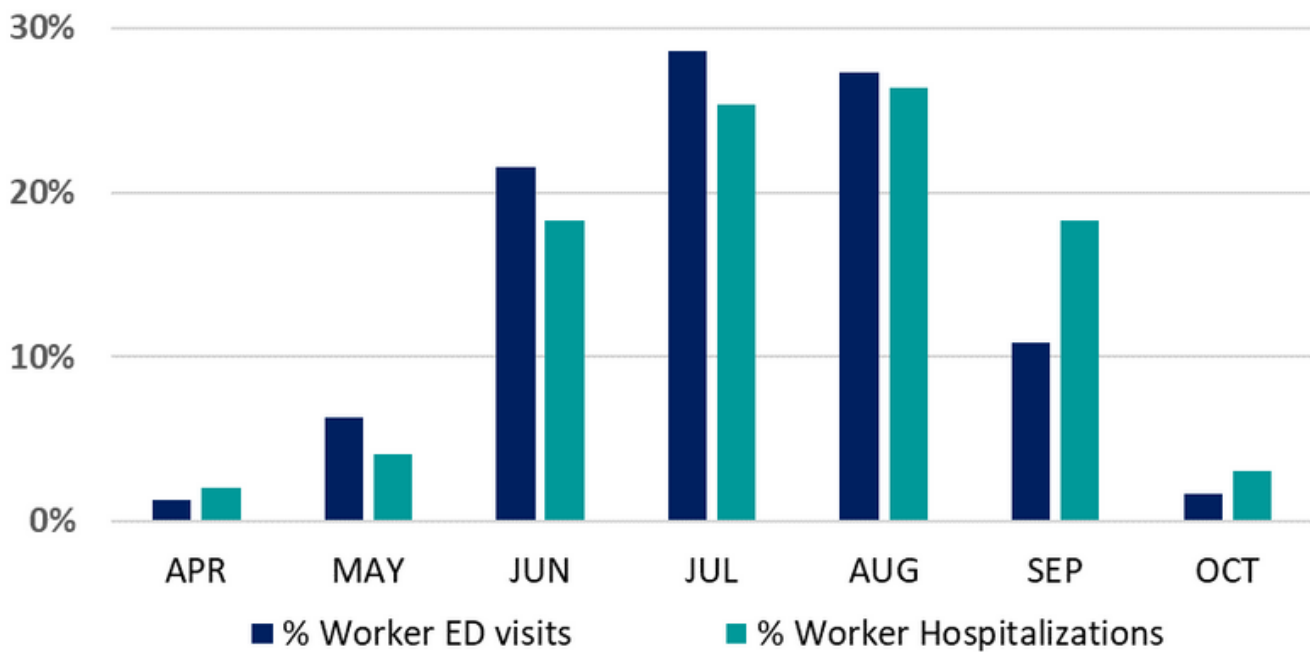
Work-related hospitalizations did not correspond to temperature as closely as ED visits.



MONTH

Most work-related cases occurred during the summer months: cases peaked in July for ED visits and August for hospitalizations.

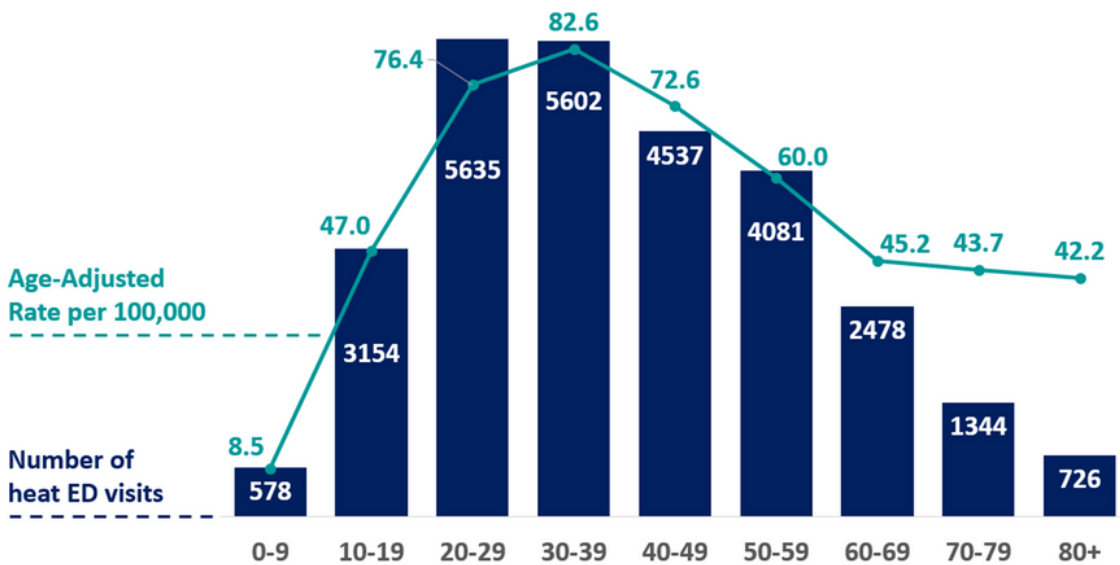
Spring and fall accounted for 20% of ED visits and 27% of hospitalizations.



AGE: ALL CASES

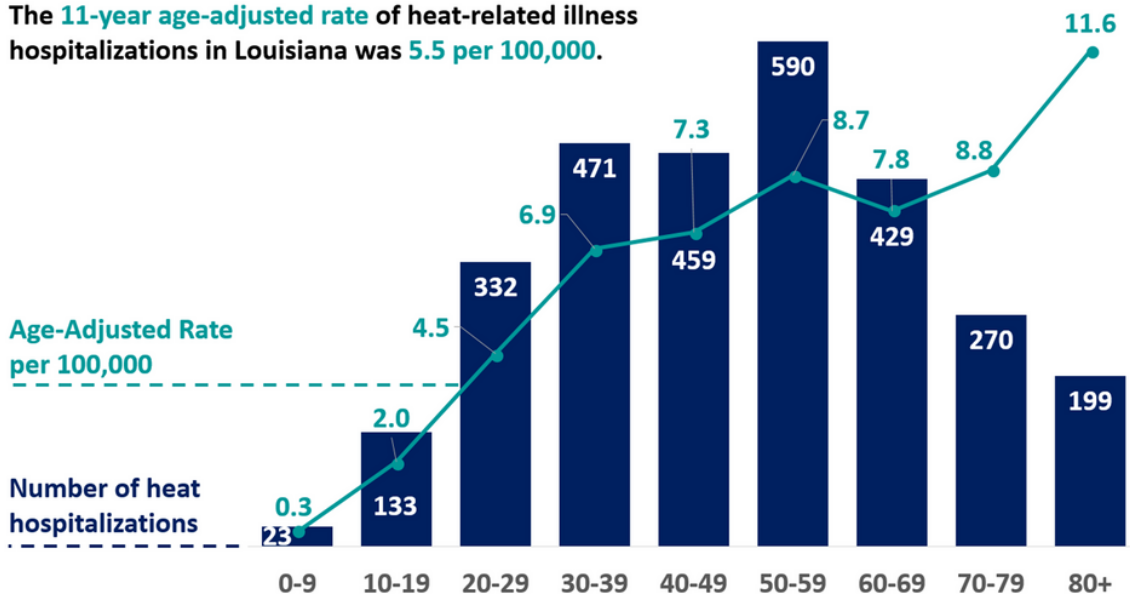
Individuals 20 to 39 years old accounted for 40% of all heat-related ED visits and had the highest rates, followed by the 40 to 59 age group. The smallest number and rate were for children under 10 years of age.

The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related illness ED visits in Louisiana was 55.7 per 100,000.



Hospitalizations for heat-related illness increased with age. The increased risk of heat for older adults is due to several factors including decrease in sweating and blood flow which limit the ability to cool, decrease in overall fitness, and increase in chronic health conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

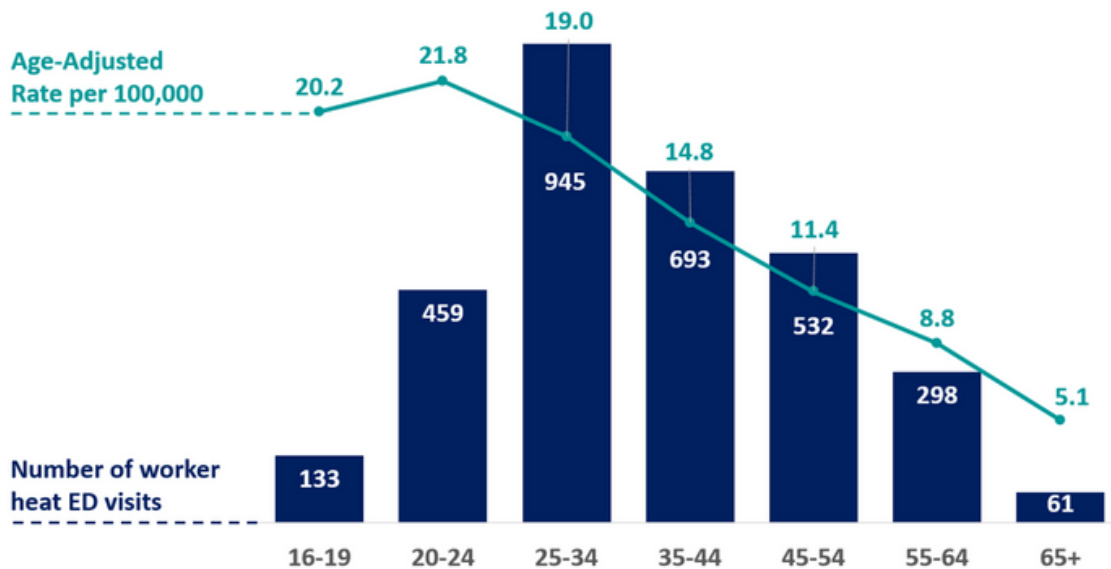
The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related illness hospitalizations in Louisiana was 5.5 per 100,000.



AGE: WORKERS

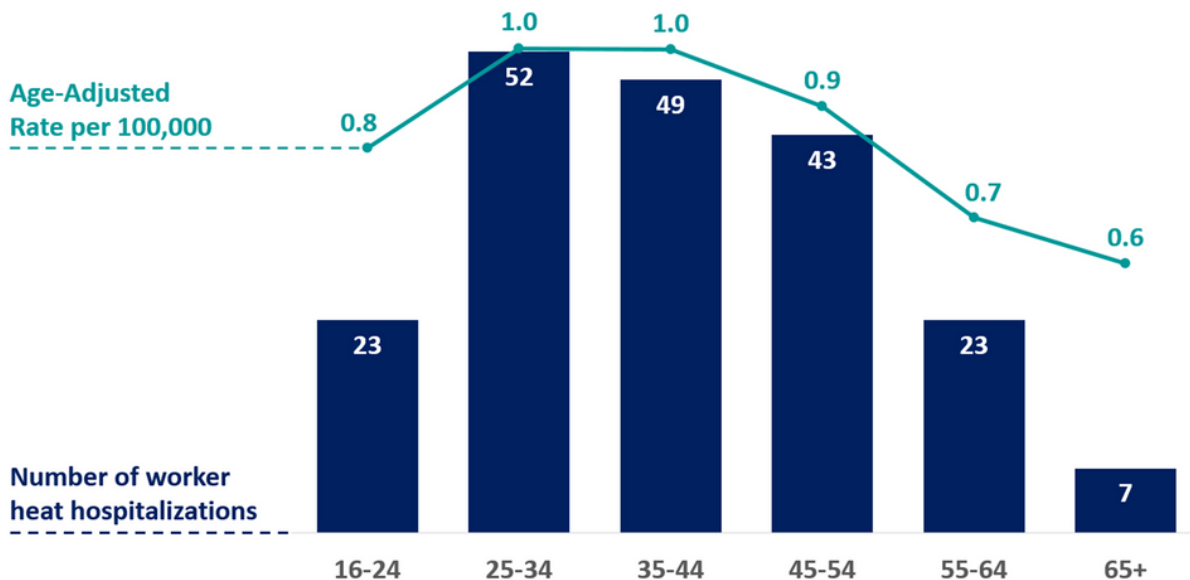
Workers ages 34 years and younger had the highest rates of ED visits for heat-related illness.

The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related illness ED visits among workers in Louisiana was 15.1 per 100,000.



The rate for heat-related hospitalizations among workers varied minimally by age.

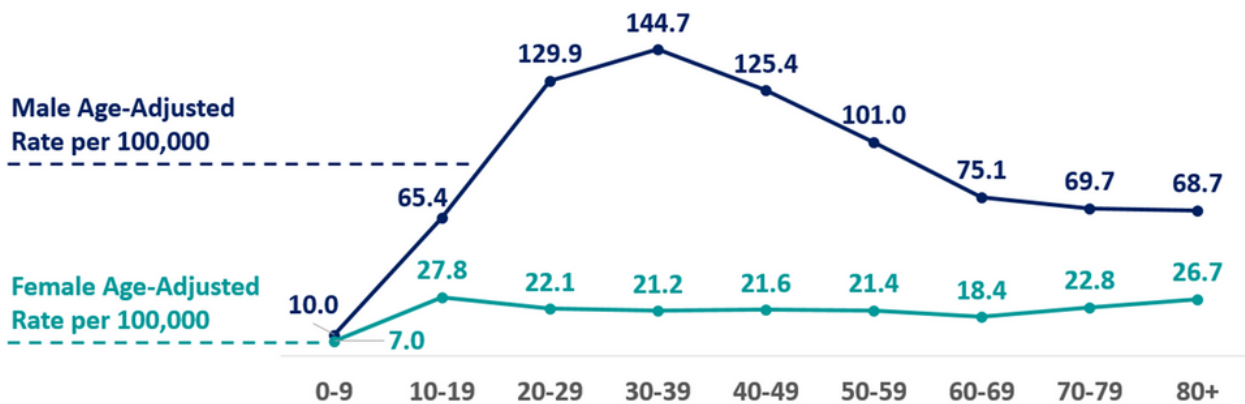
The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related hospitalizations among workers in Louisiana was 0.9 per 100,000.



SEX: ALL CASES

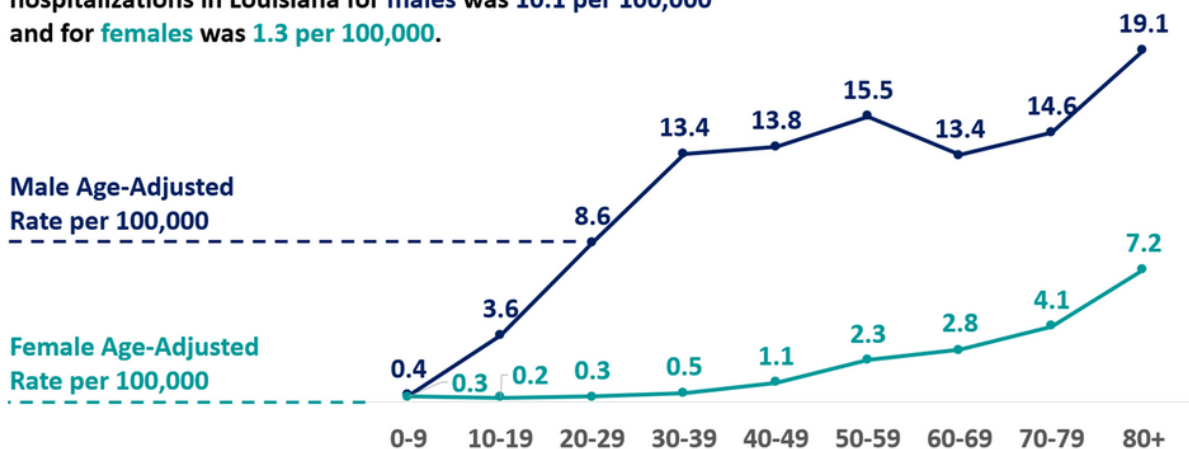
Males accounted for 81% of ED visits and had an overall rate 4.5 times the female rate. The rate for males was greater than females for every age group. For ages 20 through 49, the male rate was 5.8 to 6.8 times the female rate. This difference in rates was less acute in younger and older age groups. Males have an increased risk of heat-related illness due to employment in outdoor occupations, involvement in physically demanding activities such as yard work and house repair including post-storm clean up, and participation in sports such as football and golf.

The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related illness ED visits in Louisiana for males was 92.3 per 100,000 and for females was 20.4 per 100,000.



Males accounted for 87% of hospitalizations and had an overall rate 7.8 times the female rate. The heat-related hospitalization rate for males was greater than the female rate for every age group; the biggest difference was for ages 30 through 39 where males were hospitalized at a rate 26.8 times the female rate. For both males and females, the rate increased with increasing age.

The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related illness hospitalizations in Louisiana for males was 10.1 per 100,000 and for females was 1.3 per 100,000.

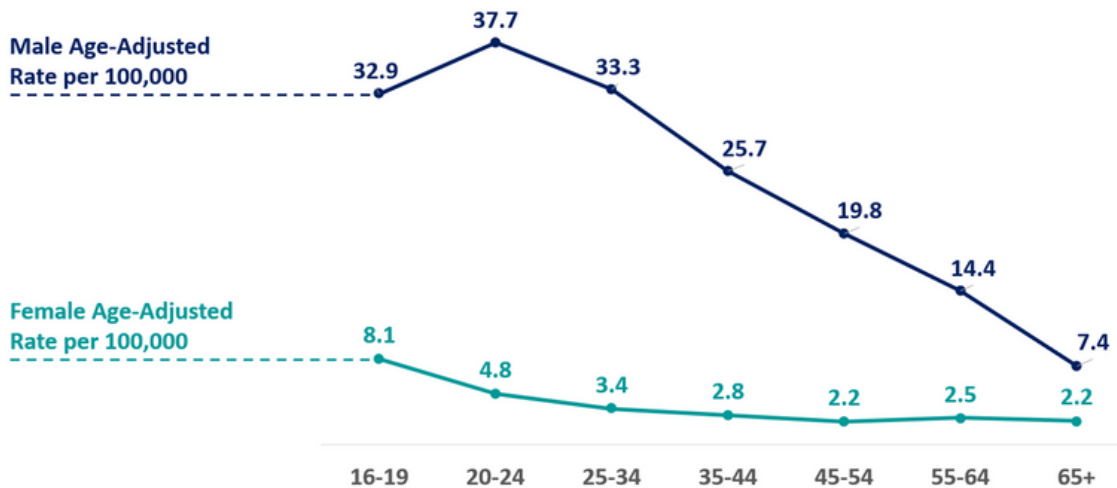


SEX: WORKERS

Differences in rates by sex highlight the difference in at-risk occupations: men are more likely to work in outdoor, physically demanding occupations.

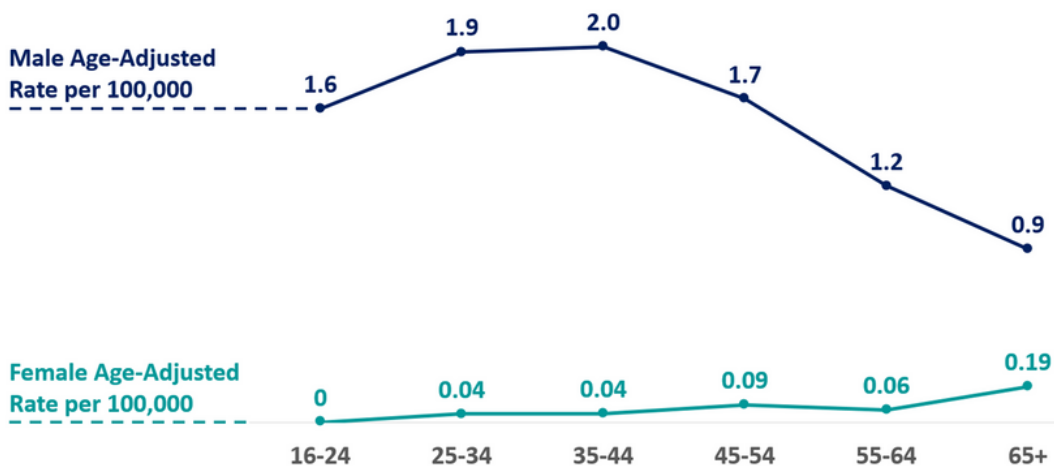
90% of the work-related ED visits for heat-related illness were males. The male rate exceeded the female rate for every age group, and for both males and females the rate decreased with age.

The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related illness ED visits among workers in Louisiana for males was 26.0 per 100,000 and for females was 3.2 per 100,000.



96% of the workers hospitalized for heat-related illness were males.

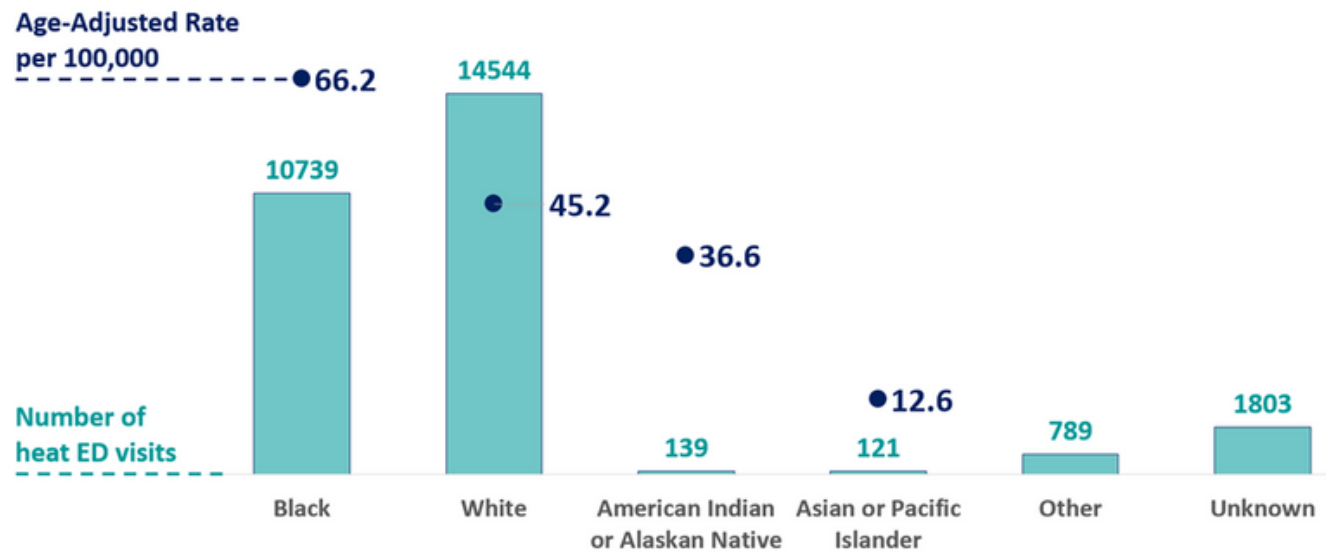
The 11-year age-adjusted rate of heat-related hospitalizations among workers in Louisiana for males was 1.7 per 100,000 and for females was 0.05 per 100,000.



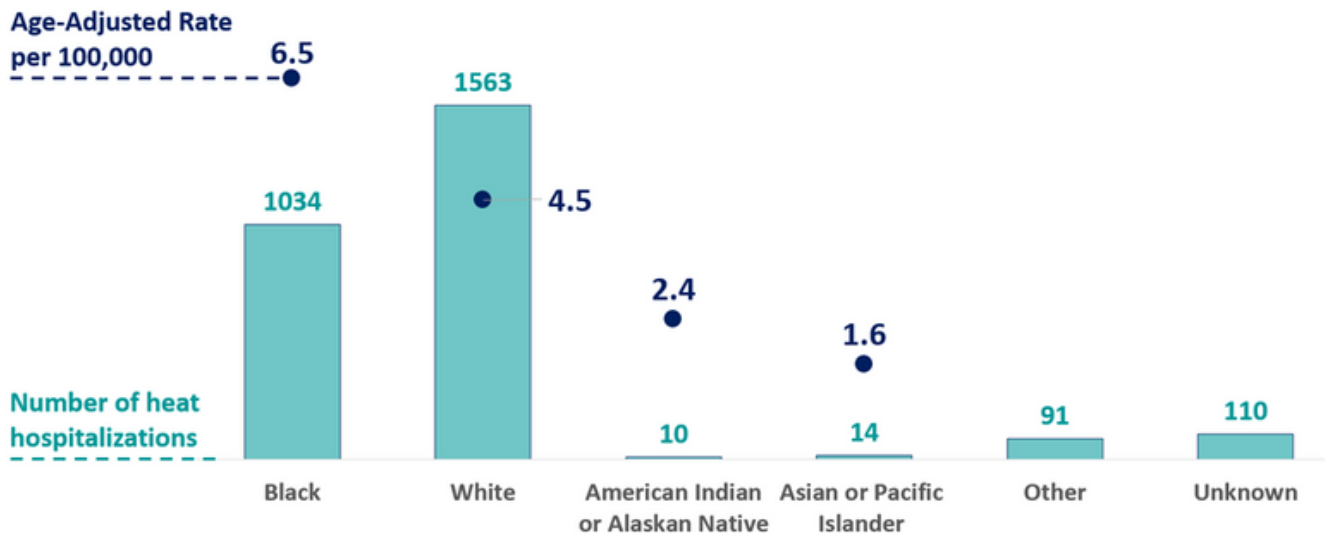
RACE: ALL CASES

Black residents had the highest rates of ED visits and hospitalizations for heat-related illness. Racial inequities in heat-related illness, and other health outcomes, are influenced by structural determinants of health including income, employment, and housing. Communities that experienced historical redlining experience hotter temperatures than neighboring areas due to factors like proximity to large roadways and industry and lack of tree cover. Neighborhoods with fewer trees have more sun exposure, resulting in higher temperatures.

Black residents' rate of ED visits was 1.5 times the rate for white residents.

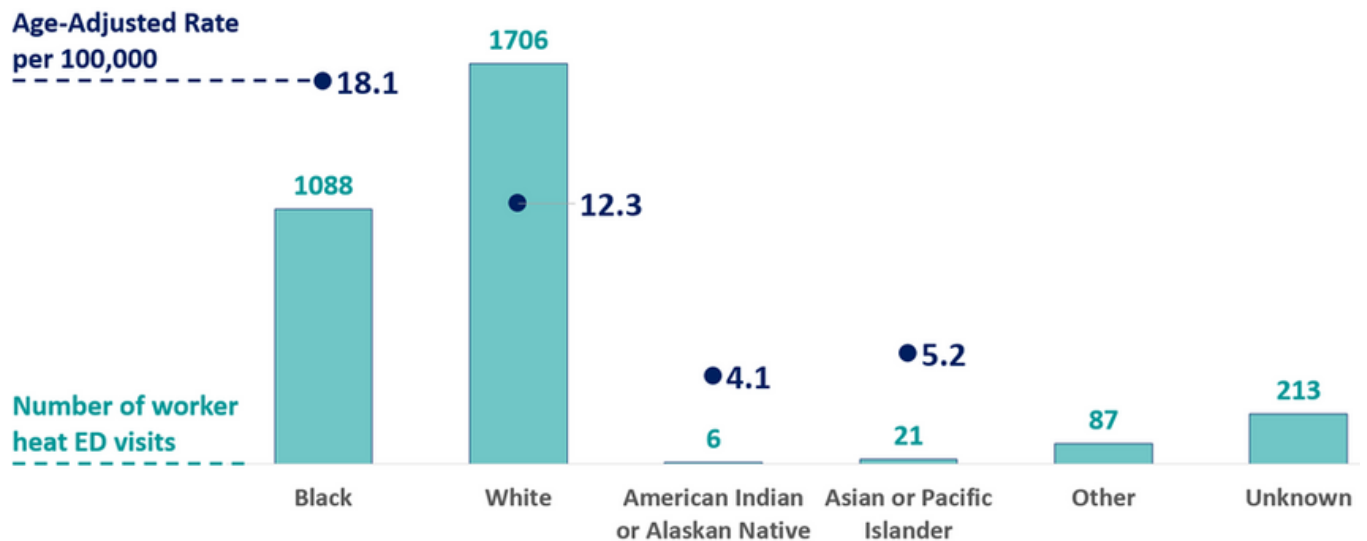


Black residents' rate of hospitalizations was 1.4 times the rate for white residents.

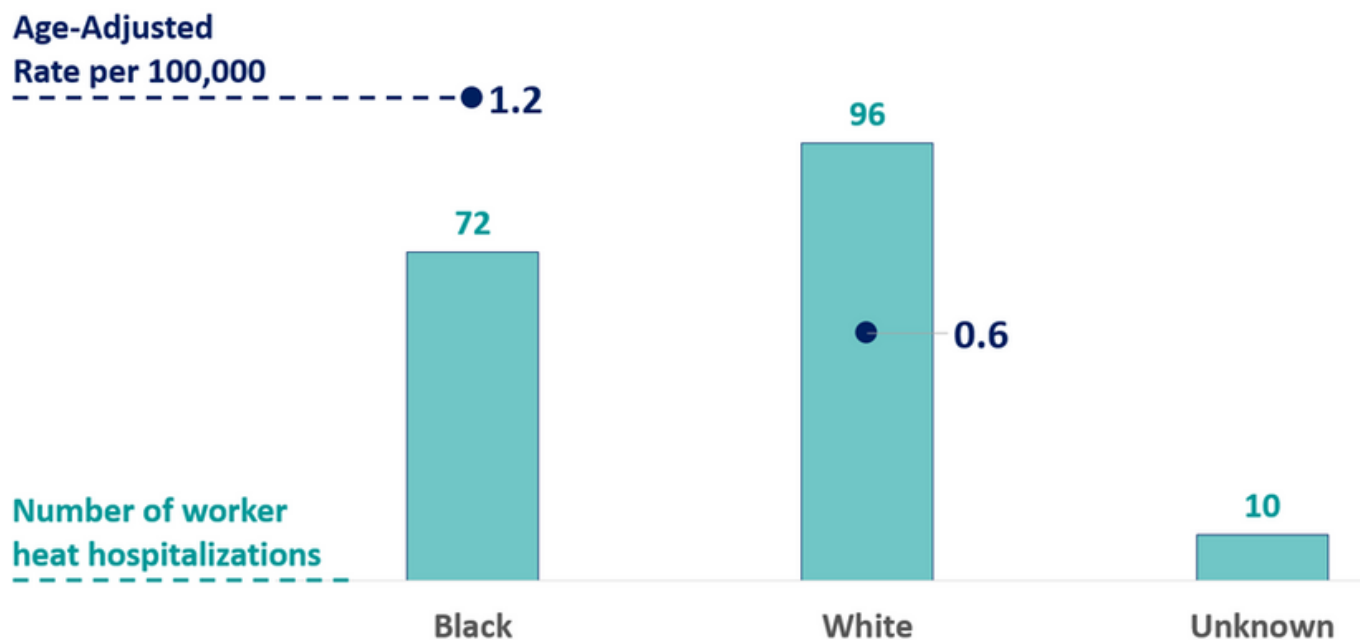


RACE: WORKERS

Black workers' rate of ED visits for heat-related illness was 1.5 times the rate for white workers.

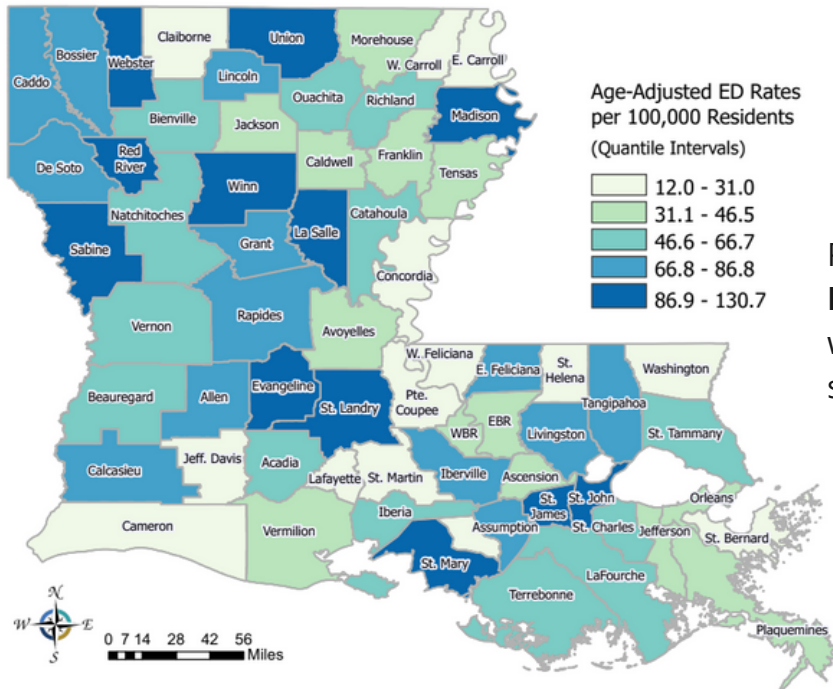


Black workers' rate of hospitalization for heat-related illness was double the rate for white workers.

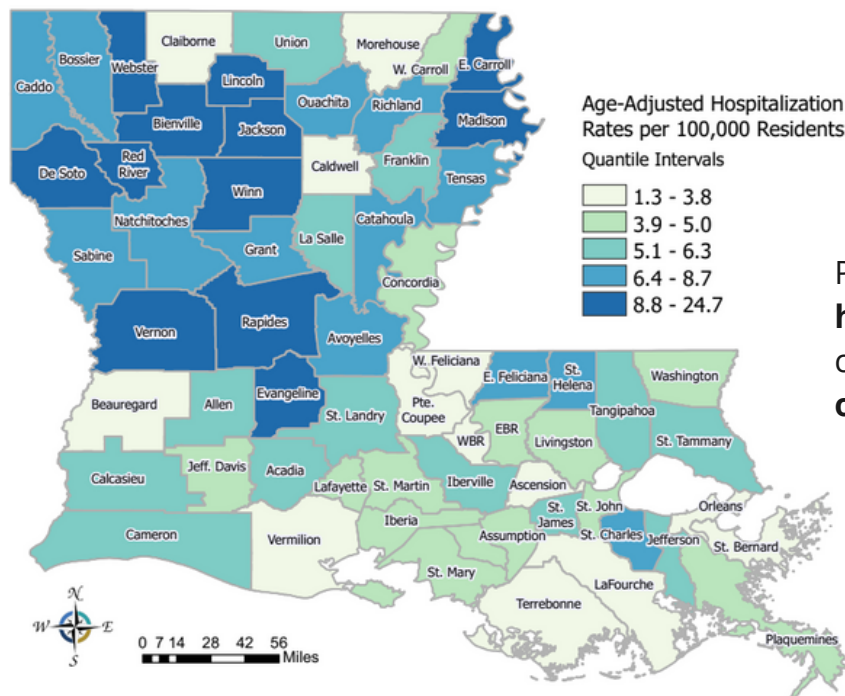


LOCATION: ALL CASES

Parish rates were calculated based on an individual's parish of residence.



Parishes with **elevated rates of ED visits** for heat-related illness were distributed throughout the state.

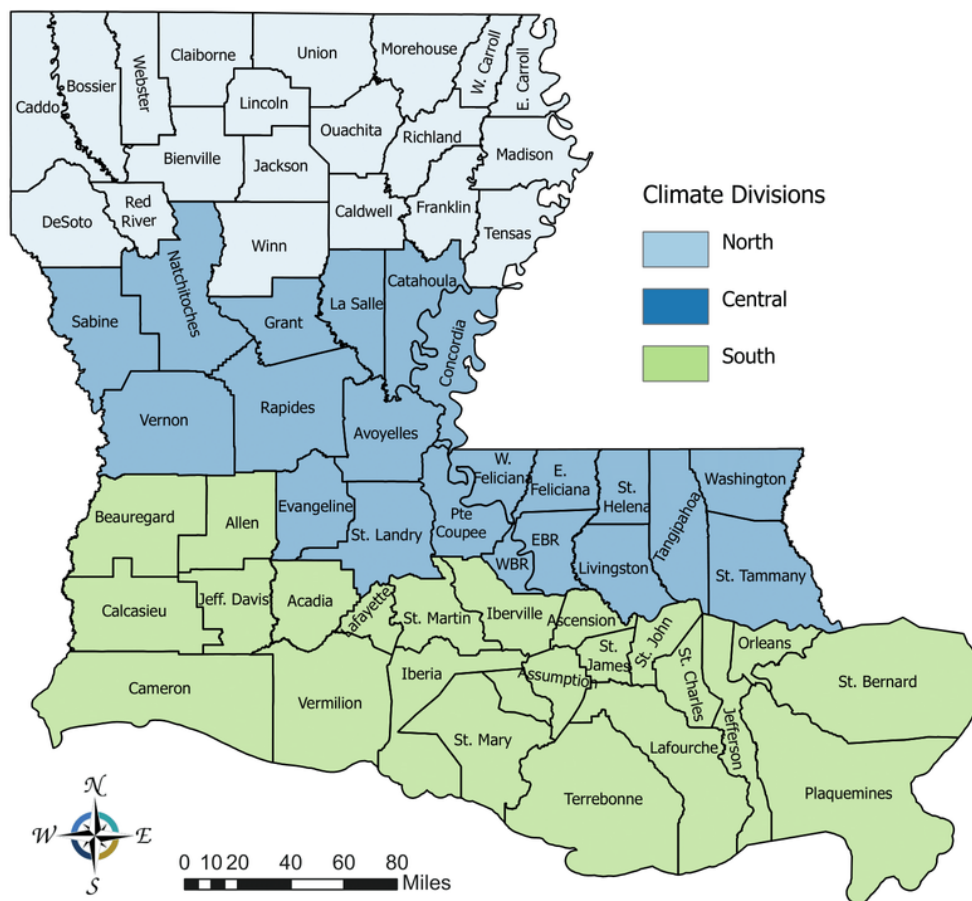


Parishes with **elevated hospitalization rates** were clustered in the **Northern part of the state**.

TEMPERATURE

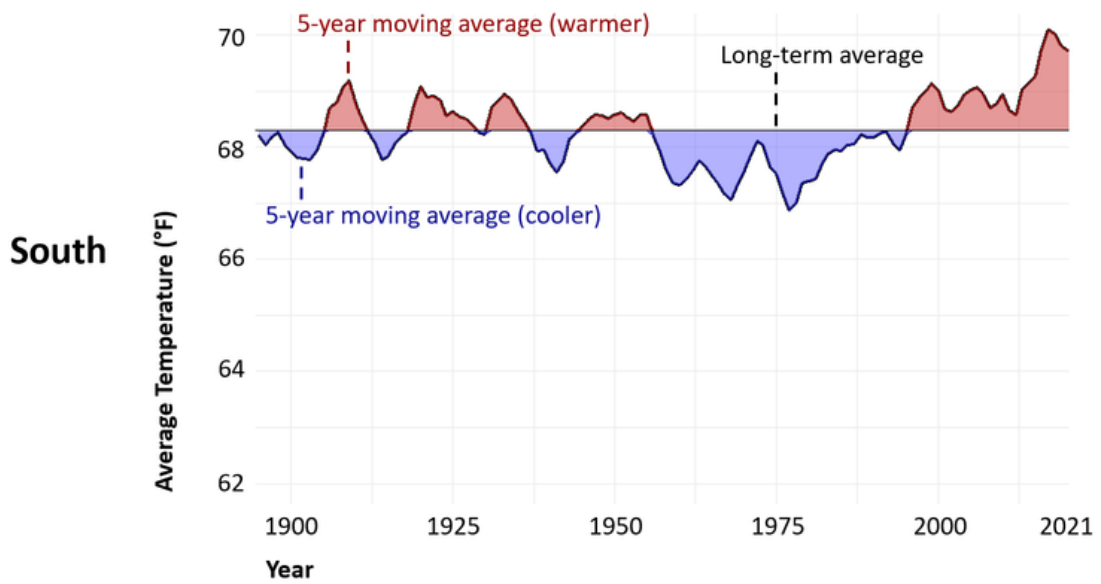
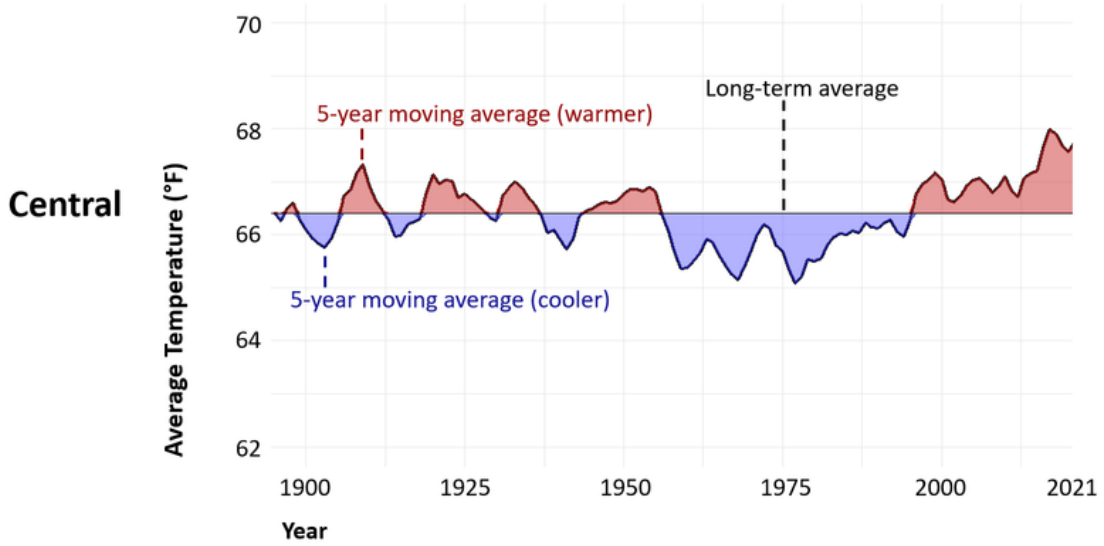
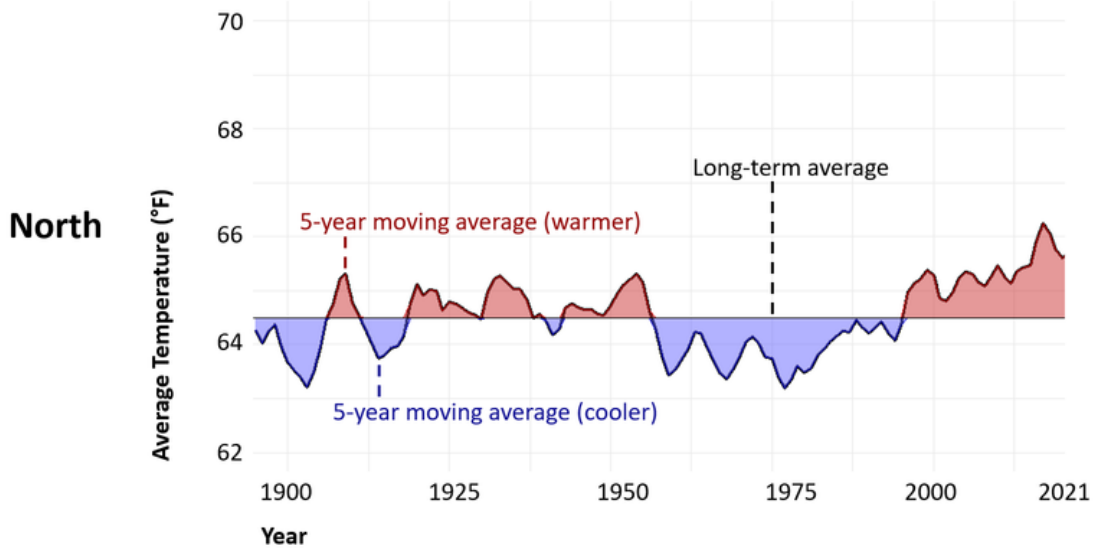
TEMPERATURE DATA: HISTORICAL

LOUISIANA PARISHES BY CLIMATE DIVISIONS



Temperature data from 1895 to 2021 are shown for the three climate divisions. Five-year moving averages of annual temperature data were plotted in comparison to the long-term average. Red indicates a warmer period than the long-term average, while blue represents a cooler period.

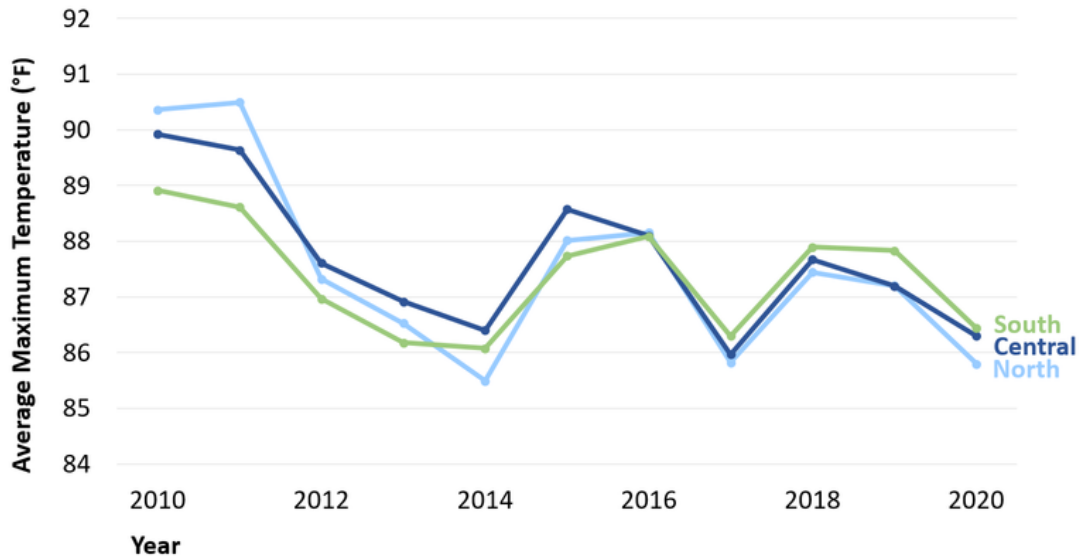
While there are annual fluctuations in the temperature, there is an overall warming trend for all three climate divisions. There is a greater rate of increase in average temperatures since the 1970s for all three climate divisions.



TEMPERATURE DATA: 2010 TO 2020

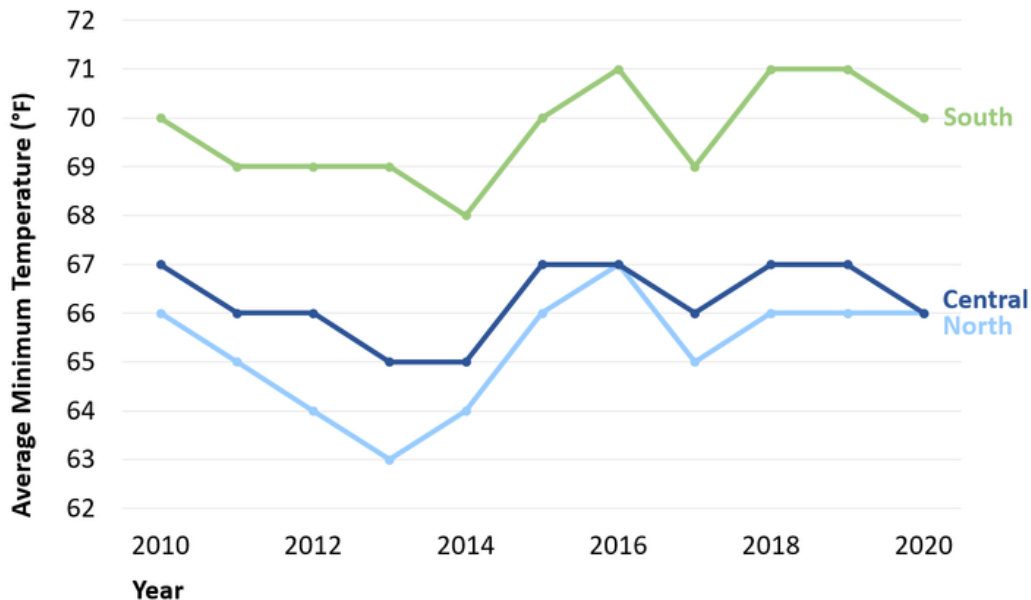
MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE

The average maximum temperature, or daytime temperature, is shown for each climate division. **All climate divisions experienced a similar trend: a warm period in 2010 and 2011 followed by colder than average temperatures in 2014.**



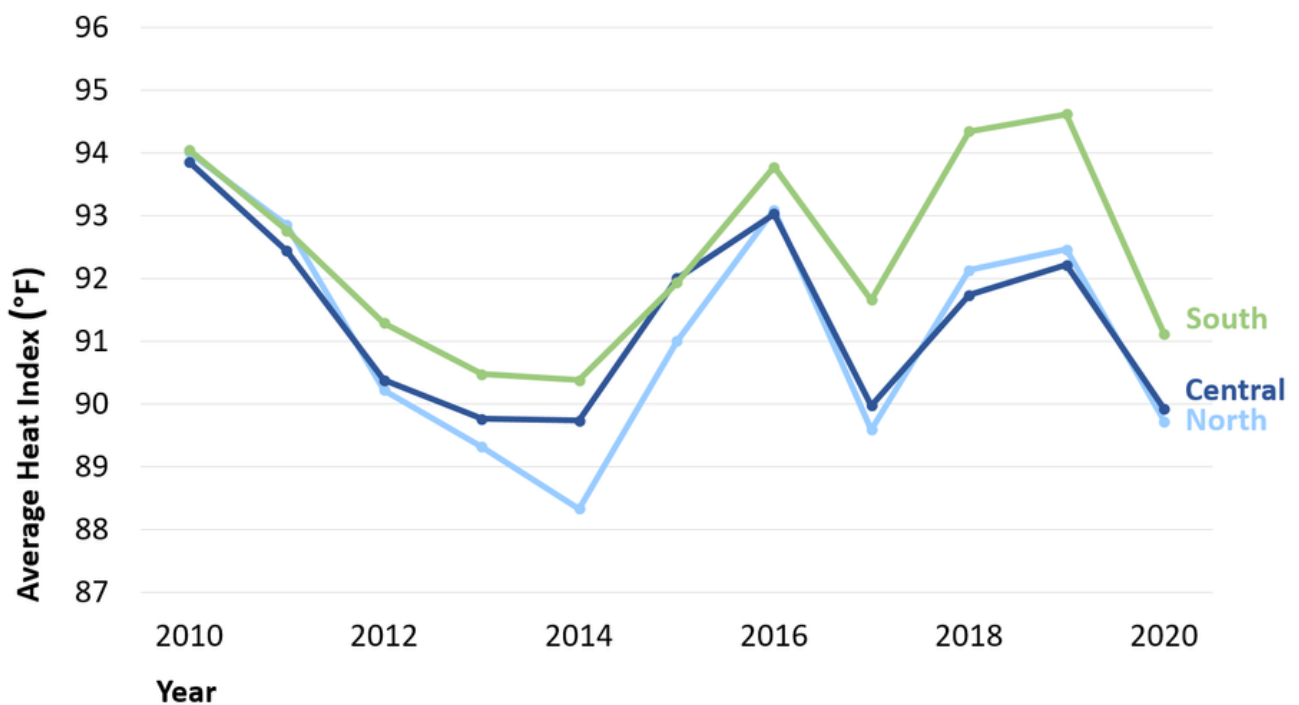
MINIMUM TEMPERATURE

Average minimum temperatures (or night-time temperatures) are highest in the South climate division. All climate divisions had an increase in their night-time temperatures. **Higher night-time temperatures can increase the risk of heat-related illness because prolonged periods of hot weather prevent people from cooling off from the day's heat.**



HEAT INDEX

Heat index is a measure of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is combined with air temperature. Heat indices range from high 80s°F to the mid-90s°F. The South climate division had higher heat index values than other climate divisions because its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico produces more humidity. The more humidity in the air, the more difficult it is to stay cool because there is less evaporation of sweat from skin.



NEXT STEPS

This report is the first detailed analysis of heat-related illness in Louisiana and is an important contribution to improving public health's capacity to monitor and assess the burden of heat on Louisianans. This report is part of a larger program strategy to a) improve the consistency, reliability, and timeliness of health data associated with heat exposure and b) promote data to inform climate resilient policies and practices. Our strategy also aims to highlight vulnerable populations, particularly working populations, who are most at risk of heat-related health impacts. Listed below is a brief description of additional projects. The timeline for these projects is 2023 through 2025.

-  **Regional Heat-Health Profiles:** We are replicating this report at the regional level to facilitate use of the information at the local level.
-  **Workers and heat:** We are analyzing work-related ED, hospitalization, and fatality data to identify high-risk occupations, demographics, and locations. The analyses will also evaluate injuries, such as fractures and lacerations, that occur when working in hot temperatures.
-  **Syndromic surveillance of heat-related illness:** Syndromic surveillance uses daily data on chief complaint, admit and discharge diagnoses, clinical impressions and triage notes from ED records to detect emerging health issues and monitor community health in near-real time. We are creating weekly reports of ED visits for heat-related illness by region, age, race, and sex.
-  **Heat vulnerability:** We are evaluating excess hospitalizations in New Orleans due to heat. Excess morbidity analysis captures all diagnoses which provides important information about how heat exacerbates chronic conditions.
-  **Hurricane death certificate review:** We are reviewing death certificates of individuals who died during or shortly after Hurricanes Laura and Ida to assess the accuracy and consistency of recording heat fatalities and other disaster-related fatalities on death certificates.
-  **Louisiana Fatality Assessment Control Evaluation Program (LA FACE):** We are partnering with the LA FACE program to assess occupational heat-related fatalities. LA FACE tracks all work-related fatalities occurring in Louisiana and conducts in-depth investigations of select fatalities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ICD CODES: HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

| International Classification of Diseases (ICD) Diagnostic and External Cause of Injury codes for Effects of Heat and Light | |
|---|--|
| Code | Definition |
| ICD 9th Revision | |
| 992.0 | Heat stroke |
| 992.1 | Heat syncope |
| 992.2 | Heat cramps |
| 992.3 | Heat exhaustion, anhidrotic |
| 992.4 | Heat exhaustion due to salt depletion |
| 992.5 | Heat exhaustion, unspecified |
| 992.6 | Heat fatigue |
| 992.7 | Heat edema |
| 992.8 | Other specified heat effects |
| 992.9 | Unspecified effects of heat and light |
| E900.0 | Excessive heat due to weather conditions |

| ICD 10th Revision | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Code | Definition |
| T67.01XA | Heatstroke and sunstroke, initial encounter |
| T67.02XA | Exertional heatstroke, initial encounter |
| T67.1XXA | Heat syncope, initial encounter |
| T67.2XXA | Heat cramp, initial encounter |
| T67.3XXA | Heat exhaustion, anhydrotic, initial encounter |
| T67.4XXA | Heat exhaustion due to salt depletion, initial encounter |
| T67.5XXA | Heat exhaustion, unspecified, initial encounter |
| T67.6XXA | Heat fatigue, transient, initial encounter |
| T67.7XXA | Heat edema, initial encounter |
| T67.8XXA | Other effects of heat and light, initial encounter |
| T67.9XXA | Effect of heat and light, unspecified, initial encounter |
| X30.XXXA | Exposure to excessive natural heat, initial encounter |
| W92.XXXA | Exposure to excessive heat of man-made origin, initial encounter |

APPENDIX B: ICD CODES: WORK-RELATEDNESS

| International Classification of Diseases External cause of morbidity: work-relatedness | |
|---|--|
| Code | Definition |
| ICD 9th Revision | |
| E000.0 | Civilian activity done for income |
| E000.1 | Military activity |
| E800-E807 | Railway accident among railway employee |
| E830-E838 | Water transport accident among crew, dockers and stevedores |
| E840-E845 | Air and space transport accidents among crew and ground crew |
| E846 | Accidents involving powered vehicles used solely within the buildings and premises of industrial or commercial establishment |
| E849.1 | Place of occurrence: farm building/land under cultivation |
| E849.2 | Place of occurrence: mine or quarry |
| E849.3 | Place of occurrence: industrial place and premises |

| ICD 10th Revision | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Y99.0 | Civilian activity done for pay |
| Y99.1 | Military activity |
| Y92.61 | Building [any] under construction as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.62 | Dock or shipyard as place of occurrence |
| Y92.63 | Factory as place of occurrence |
| Y92.64 | Mine or pit as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.65 | Oil rig as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.69 | Other specified industrial and construction area as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.71 | Barn as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.72 | Chicken coop as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.73 | Farm field as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.74 | Orchard as the place of occurrence |
| Y92.79 | Other farm location as the place of occurrence |
| Z04.21 ¹ | Encounter for examination and observation following work accident |
| Z57.61 ¹ | Occupational exposure to extreme temperature |
| Z57.81 ¹ | Occupational exposure to other risk factors |

¹ Z codes fall under the category of 'Factors influencing health status and contact with health services.'

EXHIBIT 2

Heat indices at Angola
 May 1, 2023 - September 14, 2023
 Compiled from National Weather Service data

| May 2023 | | | | June 2023 | | | |
|----------|---------------|----------|------------|-----------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Date | Max Temp (°F) | Humidity | Heat Index | Date | Max Temp (°F) | Humidity | Heat Index |
| 5/1 | 78.2 | 60.9 | * | 6/1 | 90 | 68.2 | 105 |
| 5/2 | 79.6 | 60.5 | * | 6/2 | 91.1 | 65.7 | 106 |
| 5/3 | 82.1 | 59.7 | 85 | 6/3 | 91.9 | 65.7 | 109 |
| 5/4 | 85.1 | 58.4 | 89 | 6/4 | 89.8 | 76.2 | 110 |
| 5/5 | 85 | 81.4 | 97 | 6/5 | 85.1 | 80.7 | 97 |
| 5/6 | 74.6 | 93 | * | 6/6 | 86.3 | 76.3 | 99 |
| 5/7 | 84.6 | 83.5 | 97 | 6/7 | 88.9 | 73.4 | 105 |
| 5/8 | 82.7 | 86.8 | 93 | 6/8 | 91.6 | 71.6 | 112 |
| 5/9 | 80.7 | 90.2 | 88 | 6/9 | 92.1 | 70.6 | 113 |
| 5/10 | 81.1 | 86.5 | 88 | 6/10 | 92.2 | 74 | 117 |
| 5/11 | 87.1 | 81.2 | 104 | 6/11 | 90.6 | 71.9 | 109 |
| 5/12 | 88.9 | 81 | 110 | 6/12 | 91.3 | 76.2 | 115 |
| 5/13 | 88.6 | 74.8 | 105 | 6/13 | 92.4 | 74.8 | 118 |
| 5/14 | 89.2 | 79.3 | 110 | 6/14 | 93.5 | 73.2 | 120 |
| 5/15 | 88.5 | 83.2 | 110 | 6/15 | 93.3 | 77.6 | 124 |
| 5/16 | 86.7 | 77.6 | 101 | 6/16 | 95.7 | 69.9 | 125 |
| 5/17 | 83.1 | 77.8 | 91 | 6/17 | 96.1 | 75.9 | 134 |
| 5/18 | 85.9 | 72.8 | 96 | 6/18 | 94.4 | 75.3 | 125 |
| 5/19 | 90.6 | 70.4 | 108 | 6/19 | 95.8 | 73.7 | 130 |
| 5/20 | 90.2 | 75.9 | 111 | 6/20 | 94.6 | 78.5 | 130 |
| 5/21 | 79.1 | 75.5 | * | 6/21 | 91 | 76.3 | 114 |
| 5/22 | 84.8 | 69.7 | 92 | 6/22 | 89.5 | 72.8 | 106 |
| 5/23 | 87.3 | 67 | 97 | 6/23 | 91.8 | 70.9 | 112 |
| 5/24 | 83.8 | 75.2 | 92 | 6/24 | 91.7 | 76.1 | 116 |
| 5/25 | 86.2 | 70 | 96 | 6/25 | 94.9 | 76.8 | 130 |
| 5/26 | 86.7 | 61.8 | 93 | 6/26 | 90 | 81.6 | 115 |
| 5/27 | 86.7 | 66.6 | 95 | 6/27 | 95.4 | 74 | 128 |
| 5/28 | 87.5 | 67.9 | 98 | 6/28 | 96.3 | 72.2 | 130 |
| 5/29 | 88.4 | 66.7 | 99 | 6/29 | 97.3 | 71.2 | 133 |
| 5/30 | 89.3 | 67.1 | 102 | 6/30 | 97.7 | 68.1 | 131 |
| 5/31 | 89.5 | 65.7 | 102 | | | | |

| July 2023 | | | | August 2023 | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------|------------|-------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Date | Max Temp (°F) | Humidity | Heat Index | Date | Max Temp (°F) | Humidity | Heat Index |
| 7/1 | 97.3 | 68.8 | 130 | 8/1 | 99 | 75.1 | 146 |
| 7/2 | 95.2 | 67.2 | 120 | 8/2 | 97 | 79.6 | 143 |
| 7/3 | 94.6 | 67.6 | 119 | 8/3 | 97.7 | 72.8 | 137 |
| 7/4 | 92.4 | 72.2 | 115 | 8/4 | 97.8 | 71 | 135 |
| 7/5 | 93.5 | 76.3 | 123 | 8/5 | 98.6 | 71.7 | 139 |
| 7/6 | 92.2 | 77.1 | 119 | 8/6 | 98.1 | 71.9 | 137 |
| 7/7 | 93.9 | 73.6 | 122 | 8/7 | 98.2 | 71.7 | 137 |
| 7/8 | 91.3 | 73.1 | 112 | 8/8 | 96.4 | 73.8 | 132 |
| 7/9 | 90.9 | 78.8 | 116 | 8/9 | 97 | 71.7 | 133 |
| 7/10 | 88.1 | 77.9 | 105 | 8/10 | 99.1 | 70.1 | 139 |
| 7/11 | 95 | 74.6 | 128 | 8/11 | 100 | 70.3 | 143 |
| 7/12 | 94.9 | 72 | 124 | 8/12 | 99.4 | 70.4 | 141 |
| 7/13 | 96.5 | 72.2 | 131 | 8/13 | 98.9 | 70.6 | 139 |
| 7/14 | 95.7 | 71.5 | 127 | 8/14 | 99 | 68.1 | 136 |
| 7/15 | 96.3 | 71.3 | 129 | 8/15 | 95.7 | 69.7 | 125 |
| 7/16 | 97.3 | 78.8 | 143 | 8/16 | 91.9 | 52.2 | 100 |
| 7/17 | 94.4 | 77.4 | 128 | 8/17 | 96.6 | 60.1 | 118 |
| 7/18 | 95.3 | 71.9 | 126 | 8/18 | 99.7 | 64.7 | 134 |
| 7/19 | 94.3 | 74.1 | 124 | 8/19 | 101.1 | 64.8 | 140 |
| 7/20 | 95.8 | 73.1 | 129 | 8/20 | 102.4 | 62.6 | 142 |
| 7/21 | 96 | 72.9 | 130 | 8/21 | 99.3 | 66.6 | 136 |
| 7/22 | 95.8 | 82.1 | 140 | 8/22 | 100.1 | 67.4 | 140 |
| 7/23 | 89.7 | 76.6 | 110 | 8/23 | 101.8 | 65 | 144 |
| 7/24 | 92.8 | 67.9 | 113 | 8/24 | 102 | 73.5 | 158 |
| 7/25 | 93.2 | 71.2 | 117 | 8/25 | 100.5 | 72.1 | 147 |
| 7/26 | 94 | 70.4 | 119 | 8/26 | 100.7 | 69 | 144 |
| 7/27 | 95.1 | 68.9 | 122 | 8/27 | 101.8 | 61.7 | 138 |
| 7/28 | 94.9 | 69.8 | 122 | 8/28 | 90.9 | 80.2 | 117 |
| 7/29 | 96.2 | 69.2 | 126 | 8/29 | 91.6 | 77.2 | 117 |
| 7/30 | 98.2 | 68.7 | 133 | 8/30 | 93.7 | 53.9 | 105 |
| 7/31 | 98.2 | 73.4 | 140 | 8/31 | 93 | 55.9 | 104 |

September 2023

| Date | Max Temp (°F) | Humidity | Heat Index |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 9/1 | 96.3 | 58.7 | 116 |
| 9/2 | 93 | 74.1 | 119 |
| 9/3 | 96.2 | 77.1 | 136 |
| 9/4 | 92.6 | 83.1 | 127 |
| 9/5 | 93.8 | 78.6 | 127 |
| 9/6 | 96.5 | 72.7 | 133 |
| 9/7 | 98.5 | 74 | 115 |
| 9/8 | 88.9 | 87.6 | 105 |
| 9/10 | 89.2 | 62.9 | 99 |
| 9/11 | 92.1 | 66.1 | 109 |
| 9/12 | 91.8 | 72.2 | 113 |
| 9/13 | 90.5 | 80.1 | 115 |
| 9/14 | 84.2 | 86.2 | 97 |

EXHIBIT 3

DECLARATION OF NATE WALKER

I, NATE WALKER, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify in this matter, and do so based on personal knowledge.

2. I am currently incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, Louisiana. I have been incarcerated there since 2009. I currently live in Camp D and am assigned to the Farm Line. My DOC number is 433462.

3. When I first arrived at Angola in 2009, prison officials issued me a handbook that outlined the disciplinary guidelines. Based on these disciplinary policies and my personal knowledge of the prison's disciplinary practices, I understand that nearly all incarcerated people must work on the Farm Line when they first arrive at Angola, and that anyone may be reassigned to the Farm Line as punishment for a disciplinary infraction.

4. When I first arrived at Angola in 2009, I was housed in Camp J. I worked as a ~~dom~~^{upit} orderly for around fifteen months. I received a disciplinary write-up in 2010 and was transferred to Camp D, where I was assigned to the Farm Line. I have worked on the Farm Line, off and on, since 2011. (N.W.)

5. In my experience, work call-out occurs every weekday around 6 a.m. We work in the fields from approximately 7 a.m. until mid-morning, and then sometimes again from around 11 a.m. to around 1:30 p.m. We generally walk or take a bus to the work site, where field farmers or officers assign us tasks. We pick crops, dig ditches, and cut grass. In the past, we used L blades or hoes. Other times, we are forced to pick the grass using our ungloved hands.

6. Most recently, I planted potatoes on a field that was about 20 acres. I have also planted watermelon and hand-picked sacks or crates of vegetables like carrots, cabbage, peas, okra,

squash, zucchini, broccoli, and cauliflower. Once a crate is full, we stack it on the trailer. When we are done, the prison staff and guards do a count; last time we did cabbage, it was over 300 sacks. If the count is high enough, we are allowed to go to chow. If it is not enough, we have to go back into the fields. It is backbreaking work.

7. The working conditions are harsh. The drinking water is dirty. There is no shade. Breaks are rare. Armed guards patrol the fields. There is often no place to use the bathroom. When we have access to a port-a-potty, they are extremely unsanitary.

8. To the best of my recollection, I have never been provided with sunscreen, proper work gloves, proper work boots, sunglasses, or other safety equipment necessary to safely work in the fields. The boots are rubber and do not provide protection or support for our feet. My hands have been blistered as a result of being forced to work without gloves.

9. The heat and humidity in the fields are unbearable. I have glaucoma and working in direct sunlight causes severe eye pain. I often feel light headed, nauseous, dizzy, dehydrated, and exhausted. For instance, in approximately 2017, I was working in the field on a hot day. I was feeling weak and light headed. I notified the guards that I was not feeling good, but I was ignored. I could barely stand or walk. When I tried to walk, I began to sway. The guards called medical and told them that I was intoxicated. I was arrested and received a disciplinary write-up for intoxication. I was not intoxicated.

10. I am an individual with a disability. Specifically, I suffer from high blood pressure, depression, glaucoma, thyroid cancer and other thyroid issues, stomach issues, sleeping problems, and heart arrhythmia. The prison prescribes me medications to manage those conditions, like a sleeping aid, stool softeners, thyroxine, and Benadryl. I also have a family history of sickle-cell

anemia. Because of these conditions, it is dangerous for me to work in the Angola fields, especially in high heat and humidity.

11. Prison officials know about my disabilities, but they refuse to give me a permanent duty status. I have requested a duty status so I will not be forced to work on the Farm Line. My request for relief was denied. *See* LSP-2023-0768.

12. I've seen tractors and other modern farming equipment at Angola. Based on my experience, I believe the agricultural work we are forced to do could be done more efficiently using this equipment.

13. Prison officials supervise and control all aspects of my work. These officials are known as "freemen." I believe officials from Prison Enterprises, sometimes known as field farmers, also supervise and direct the agricultural work at Angola.

14. I have never been taught, trained, or asked to provide input about crop planting or farming decisions. I have never received any training at all for my Farm Line work.

15. I make two cents an hour for my labor. I would not work for two cents an hour if I had a choice.

16. I did not choose to work on the Farm Line or to participate in compulsory agricultural labor. I did not volunteer or request to work on the Farm Line. I only work on the Farm Line to avoid serious harm and punishment, like solitary confinement and loss of phone time and canteen access. Refusal to work can also result in serious legal harm, such as the loss of good time credit and the loss of eligibility to apply for clemency.

17. From my review of the disciplinary matrix and based on my personal knowledge of Angola's practices, I understand that incarcerated people who disobey prison officials, refuse

to work, or fail to meet work quotas can be subject to serious disciplinary action, including disciplinary confinement.

18. Since I've been incarcerated at Angola, I've received several Rule 28 disciplinary write-ups. On several occasions, prison officials threatened to punish me if I stopped working, encouraged other incarcerated men to stop working, complained about the unsafe work conditions, or failed to work "efficiently."

19. If given a meaningful choice, I would not work on the Farm Line.

20. To the best of my knowledge, hundreds of men incarcerated at Angola, if not more, have been forced to work on the Farm Line just this year.

21. I understand that I am bringing this case on behalf of all current and future individuals incarcerated at Angola, not just myself. I understand the responsibilities involved in being both a plaintiff and a class representative in this lawsuit. I am prepared to cooperate with my counsel and meet all of my duties and obligations to make sure this lawsuit is pursued in the best interest of myself and all other class members. I understand that means that I may be required to have my deposition taken and to respond to other discovery. I am prepared to help prepare for and attend trial, to testify, and to assist my attorneys as needed and to continue to participate actively in the direction of this case. *See Appendix A.*

*

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, on August 17, 2023.

Nate Walker # 433462

* 22. The prison has issued me a "heat precaution" duty status because of my disabilities. That status exempts me from working the Farm Line from May to October. But it does not protect me from being forced to work in the fields at any other time. I believe that I will be forced back into the field in October.

N.W.

EXHIBIT 4

DECLARATION OF DAMARIS JACKSON

I, DAMARIS JACKSON, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify in this matter, and do so based on personal knowledge.

2. I am currently incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, Louisiana. I have been incarcerated there since 2002. My DOC number is 454295. I currently live in Camp D.

3. I have worked on the Farm Line, on and off, for about 21 years. I currently work on Line 25.

4. When I first arrived at Angola in 2002, prison officials issued me a disciplinary rules handbook and assigned me to work on a Farm Line. I had never worked in farming before. My understanding is that almost every incarcerated person must work the Farm Line when they first arrive at Angola. Even people with a duty status are sometimes forced to work in the field. I also understand, based on prison policy and practice, that individuals can be reassigned to the Farm Line as punishment for an alleged disciplinary violation.

5. I worked on the Farm Line from 2002 until approximately 2005. After that, I worked on and off the Farm Line until about 2021. Around June 2021, I was working in the mattress factory. Prison officials reassigned me to Farm Line 15b, even though I had not received a disciplinary write-up. I refused to work in the field and received a Rule 28 write-up.

6. I am now assigned to Farm Line 25, alongside approximately 20 other incarcerated men. Every weekday, we report to work call-out around 6 a.m. We either walk or take a bus to the field, where a field farmer tells us what to do. We typically work from 7 a.m. until 11 or 11:30 a.m. Sometimes, we are sent back in the afternoon for a second shift.

7. We are not provided with tools or equipment to use in the fields. Instead, the prison officials force us to use our hands to cultivate crops like squash, zucchini, and okra. We don't even get sufficient gloves or protective work clothing or work boots. I have never been provided with sunscreen, sunglasses, a sunhat, or other safety equipment necessary to safely work in the fields.

8. As a result, work on the Farm Line is unsafe. For example, the okra makes my skin break out wherever I have touched it. I have also gotten severe blisters from working without proper gloves. My right knee swells frequently when I work in the field. Prison officials have given me ibuprofen to treat the swelling, but they still send me into the field.

9. The heat and humidity in the fields are unbearable. When working outside on the Farm Line, I often feel dehydrated, lightheaded, and dizzy. I have felt chilled despite the extreme heat and humidity. I often get muscle aches and headaches. These symptoms have all gotten worse this summer, as the heat and humidity have been extreme.

10. I am an individual with a disability. Specifically, I have high blood pressure. Working on the Farm Line exceeds my physical capabilities, is unduly painful, and exacerbates my serious medical condition. Because of my condition, it is dangerous for me to work in the fields, especially in high heat and humidity. Prison officials know this, and they know I have high blood pressure. They even prescribed me Valsartan to manage it.

11. I requested reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and a duty status so I will not be forced to work on the Farm Line. My request for relief was denied. *See* LSP-2023-0828.

12. I've seen tractors and other modern farming equipment at Angola. The prison forces us to do manual agricultural labor that could be accomplished more efficiently with modern farming equipment.

13. Prison officials supervise and control all aspects of my work. These officials are known as “freemen.” I believe officials from Prison Enterprises, sometimes known as field farmers, also supervise and direct the agricultural work at Angola.

14. I have never been taught, trained, or asked to provide input about crop planting or farming decisions. I have never received any training for my work on the Farm Line.

15. Most, if not all, other Farm Line workers are Black, like me.

16. I did not choose to work on the Farm Line. I did not volunteer or request to work on the Farm Line. I only work on the Farm Line to avoid serious harm and punishment. From my review of the disciplinary rules in the handbook and based on my personal knowledge of prison practices, I know that incarcerated people who disobey prison officials, refuse to work, or fail to meet work quotas can be subject to serious disciplinary action, including disciplinary confinement. Refusal to work can also result in serious legal harm, such as the loss of good time credit and the loss of eligibility to apply for clemency.

17. I applied for a job change around March 2023. The classification officer denied my request, even though I had not had a disciplinary infraction in the previous 90 days.

18. After that, I began refusing to work the Farm Line. The Farm Line is purely punishment and serves no rehabilitative purpose. It is mentally and physically grueling, and it prevents me from working on my legal case or participating in self-improvement programs. Prison officials punished me with a disciplinary write-up and a suspended sentence of 90 days. Officers also threatened to send me to segregation in the cellblock. I was still forced to go out into the field.

19. I again refused to work the Farm Line around June 2023. Prison officials punished me with another disciplinary write-up and another suspended sentence.

20. Prison officials have locked me in the cellblocks several times for refusing to work. I have also been punished at least eight times with serious harm like loss of canteen, phone time, and yard time. Prison officials have also taken my incentive pay. This means I can't purchase basic necessities, like food and hygiene products, from canteen.

21. On several occasions, prison officials have threatened to punish me if I stopped working, encouraged other incarcerated men to stop working, or complained about the unsafe work conditions, including the extreme heat in the fields.

22. Knowing I cannot refuse to work, or to stand up for my basic human and civil rights, without facing severe physical and psychological harm makes me feel powerless. It is psychologically and mentally traumatizing. It makes me feel numb, anxious, and depressed. Working in the field, like a slave, makes me feel the same way. Being sent to lockup is extremely difficult. But sometimes it's better than working in the plantation fields like a slave. I am in a no-win situation. I either have to work the plantation crops on the Farm Line against my will, or be locked up in the cellblocks. Both situations ^{are} intolerable, and both keep me from participating in rehabilitative programs or working on my case.

23. I make two cents an hour for my labor on the Farm Line. I would not work for two cents an hour if I had a choice. I cannot afford to purchase necessities from canteen, like soap and deodorant, without financial support from my family.

24. If given a meaningful choice, I would not work on the Farm Line.

25. To the best of my knowledge, hundreds of men incarcerated at Angola, if not more, have been forced to work on the Farm Line just this year.

26. I understand that I am bringing this case on behalf of all current and future individuals incarcerated at Angola, not just myself. I understand the responsibilities involved in

being both a plaintiff and a class representative in this lawsuit. I am prepared to cooperate with my counsel and meet all of my duties and obligations to make sure this lawsuit is pursued in the best interest of myself and all other class members. I understand that means that I may be required to have my deposition taken, to testify at trial, and to respond to other discovery. I am prepared to help prepare for and attend trial, to testify, and to assist my attorneys as needed and to continue to participate actively in the direction of this case. *See* Appendix A.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct and based on my personal knowledge.

Executed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, on August 17, 2023.

Damaris Jackson
Damaris Jackson #154295

EXHIBIT 5

DECLARATION OF KEVIAS HICKS

I, KEVIAS HICKS, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify in this matter, and do so based on personal knowledge.

2. I am currently incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, Louisiana. I have been incarcerated there since 2013. My DOC number is 579490. I currently live in Camp D and am forced to work Farm Line 24/25.

3. When I first arrived at Angola, I was sent to extended lockdown for about 16 months. I was given one hour every day out of my cell to shower and use the phone. Then, I was transferred to the working cell block in Main Prison and assigned to the Farm Line. I was transferred to Camp D around 2018 and assigned to the Farm Line there.

4. On Line 24/25, about 20 of us generally walk or ride an old school bus into the fields. More people are assigned to the Farm Line at any given time, but they don't all go out every day because some have court or medical appointments. We work from about 7:30 until 11:30 a.m., even when there is a heat advisory. We rarely get breaks. There is not always drinking water or portapotties.

5. Recently, I have been forced to pick rotten watermelons with my hands. My understanding is that the temperature is so hot in the fields that the watermelons are rotting on the vine. We are forced to pick vegetables, goosepick grass, and sometimes dig ditches. Then, after our shift, we have to walk back to Camp.

6. The heat and humidity is brutal and unsafe. It is extremely hot. I have seen people pass out in the sun. I once witnessed a man have a seizure. The guards thought he was faking it.

When I'm working in the fields, I often feel light-headed and dizzy, with headaches and muscle cramps. My feet often swell up.

7. The prison does not provide us with sufficient safety equipment, like proper work gloves, proper work boots, sunscreen, sunglasses, and hats. I have had to buy my own work boots just to keep myself safe in the fields. This is very difficult, since I only make two cents an hour on the Farm Line, if anything at all. I have to rely on friends and family to help me buy basic necessities, like soap and work boots.

8. I did not choose to work on the Farm Line. I did not volunteer or request to work on the Farm Line. I only work on the Farm Line to avoid serious harm and punishment. From my understanding of the disciplinary system and based on my personal knowledge of prison practices, I understand that incarcerated people who disobey prison officials, refuse to work, or fail to meet work quotas can be subject to serious disciplinary action, including disciplinary confinement. This has happened to me, several times. Prison officials have also threatened to punish me if I stopped working, worked too slow, or complained about the unsafe work conditions. Refusal to work can also result in serious legal harm, such as the loss of good time credit and the loss of eligibility to apply for clemency.

9. I have received disciplinary write-ups for work violations. For instance, I was recently locked in the dungeon for allegedly refusing a work call. After several days in the dungeon, I was sent back to the Farm Line. The dungeon is inhumane. The cells are very small, we're deprived of basic necessities like toothpaste and soap, and there's very little interaction with others. At various points, the prison has also taken away my phone time and canteen access.

10. Prison officials supervise and control all aspects of my work.

11. I have never been taught, trained, or asked to provide input about crop planting or farming decisions. I have never received any training at all for my Farm Line work.

12. I am an individual with a disability. Working on the Farm Line exceeds my physical capabilities. It is unduly painful and exacerbates my serious medical conditions. Specifically, I have anxiety and depression. I also suffer from allergies. The prison's medical staff has prescribed me medications including Elavil, Prozac, and Benadryl to manage my health conditions. Because of these conditions and the drugs I take for them, it is dangerous for me to work in the Angola fields, especially in high heat and humidity.

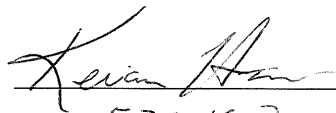
13. I have requested reasonable accommodations for my disability. Specifically, I requested a duty status so I will not be forced to work on the Farm Line.

14. If given a meaningful choice, I would not work on the Farm Line.

15. To the best of my knowledge, hundreds of men incarcerated at Angola, if not more, have been forced to work on the Farm Line just this year.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct and based on my personal knowledge.

Executed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, on August 17, 2023.



579490

EXHIBIT 6

DECLARATION OF KENDRICK STEVENSON

I, KENDRICK STEVENSON, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify in this matter, and do so based on personal knowledge.

2. I am currently incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, Louisiana. I have been incarcerated there since 1999. I was convicted by a non-unanimous jury. I currently live in Camp D. My DOC number is 413328. I am currently forced to work Farm Line 24/25.

3. When I arrived at Angola, prison officials issued me a handbook that included the disciplinary guidelines. Based on these disciplinary policies and my personal knowledge of the prison's disciplinary practices, I understand that nearly all incarcerated people must work on the Farm Line when they first arrive at Angola, and that anyone may be reassigned to the Farm Line as punishment for a disciplinary infraction.

4. I have worked on the Farm Line, off and on, since around 2004. Back then, we were given a sling blade and told to cut tall, thick grass in the blazing heat. My hands blistered almost immediately. Another incarcerated person working the line told me to urinate on my hands to make them tough. Someone else advised me to tie a wet handkerchief ^{on (KS)} my hands. An armed guard on horseback patrolled the rows.

5. At some point, I became a barber. I liked that work. I treated people with kindness and respect, and I made sure the barbershop was clean and nice. I later entered a GED program and signed up for self-help programs. I wanted to improve myself and make a difference. I also worked in the hospice for about 10 years. That was an incredible experience. I helped people who

were near death. I made sure they had drinking water and clean sheets. I fed guys who could not feed themselves. I really took care of people.

6. Today, prison officials force me to hand-pick crops on Farm Line 24/25. The work is punitive and degrading. Along with at least 20 other men, I work the fields from about 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m., five days a week. The work is back-breaking. We have to squat and pluck grass with our fingers.

7. We are not provided with tools. Instead, we are forced to use our hands to cultivate crops like squash, zucchini, and okra. We don't even get sufficient work gloves or protective work boots. I have never been provided with sunscreen, sunglasses, a sunhat, or other safety equipment necessary to safely work in the fields. We work from about 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. There are probably around 20 other men on the Line. We are paid two cents an hour, or nothing at all, under the barrel of a gun.

8. Prison officials supervise and control all aspects of my work. I have never been taught, trained, or asked to provide input about crop planting or farming decisions. I have never received any training for my work on the Farm Line.

9. The heat and humidity in the fields are unbearable. We are forced to work outside even when there is a heat advisory. Doing this difficult manual labor, I often feel dehydrated, lightheaded, and dizzy. My muscles have locked up, like a charley horse in my back and arms. These symptoms are worse in the extreme heat.

10. I am an individual with a disability. Specifically, I have ventricular tachycardia, high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, pre-diabetes, and other cardiac conditions. Prison officials know about my conditions, because they diagnosed me with them and

prescribe medications for them. For instance, I take losartan, metformin, and naltrexone, among other medications.

11. Working on the Farm Line exceeds my physical capabilities, is unduly painful, and exacerbates my disabilities and serious medical conditions. Because of these disabilities, it is dangerous for me to work in the fields, especially in high heat and humidity.

12. I have requested reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and a duty status so I will not be forced to work on the Farm Line.

13. I did not choose to work on the Farm Line. I did not volunteer or request to work on the Farm Line. I only work on the Farm Line to avoid serious harm and punishment. From my review of the disciplinary rules and based on my personal knowledge of prison practices, I know that incarcerated people who disobey prison officials, refuse to work, or fail to meet work quotas can be subject to serious disciplinary action, including disciplinary confinement. Refusal to work can also result in serious legal harm, such as the loss of good time credit and the loss of eligibility to apply for clemency.

14. This has happened to me, several times. For example, around February 2023, I got a disciplinary write-up. I was transferred to Camp D and forced out on the Farm Line. Around the beginning of August 2023, I got another write-up for failing to work the plantation row crops “efficiently.” That day, prison officials forced me to wear canvas shoes into the field, because they would not provide me with work boots. My punishment included cell confinement and two weeks lost canteen, suspended for 90 days. This has caused me serious physical, emotional, and psychological harm. It also caused me legal harm because it jeopardized my eligibility to file a clemency petition.

15. If given a meaningful choice, I would not work on the Farm Line.

16. To the best of my knowledge, hundreds of men incarcerated at Angola, if not more, have been forced to work on the Farm Line just this year.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct and based on my personal knowledge.

Executed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, on August 17th, 2023.

Kendrick Stevenson
Kendrick Stevenson #413328

EXHIBIT 7

DECLARATION OF DAMION THOMPSON

I, DAMION THOMPSON declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify in this matter, and do so based on personal knowledge.
2. I am currently incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, Louisiana. I have been incarcerated there since 2022. I currently live in Camp D. My DOC number is 741171.
3. When I first arrived at Angola in 2022, prison officials issued me a handbook that outlined the disciplinary rules. Based on these disciplinary policies and my personal knowledge of the prison's disciplinary practices, I understand that nearly all incarcerated people must work on the Farm Line when they first arrive at Angola, and that anyone may be reassigned to the Farm Line as punishment for a disciplinary infraction.
4. When I arrived at Angola around June of 2022, I was assigned to work Farm Lines 21 and 24 out of Main Prison. I was forced to work on those Lines for about three months. I was transferred to Camp D around August of 2022, and I was forced to work farm lines out of Camp D for about six months.
5. Around February of 2023, I received a disciplinary write up for refusal to work out in the fields and was forced into lockdown in the working cellblock of Camp D. I am still in lockdown. I am confined to a two-person cell for most of the day, seven days a week. I am only allowed out of my cell for 30 minutes to shower or make a phone call, and around one hour to exercise. Being on lockdown is psychologically traumatic. We are cut off from meaningful human interaction and opportunities for rehabilitation. It's also physically dangerous because you are trapped in a tiny cell with a person who may want to do you harm.

6. Approximately 30 people worked on the Farm Lines out of Camp D on any given workday. Work call occurred every weekday around 6 a.m. We were forced to work in the fields from around 7 a.m. until around 11:30 a.m. Sometimes, we would have to do a second shift in the afternoon.

7. We were not provided with tools. Instead, we were forced to use our hands to cultivate crops and do other work. The working conditions are harsh. The drinking water is dirty. The water cooler is never cleaned. Although I didn't want to, I still had to drink the dirty water just to stay hydrated and avoid passing out. There was no shade. The breaks were too short to provide any meaningful rest and recovery, and they were given at the discretion of the guards. Sometimes there were portable toilets available, but they were almost never sanitary.

8. To the best of my recollection, I have never been provided with sunscreen, proper work gloves, proper work boots, sunglasses, a sunhat, or other safety equipment necessary to safely work in the fields.

9. I've seen tractors and other modern farming equipment at Angola. We didn't use that equipment on the Lines out of Camp D.

10. Prison officials, including officials from Prison Enterprises, supervised and controlled all aspects of my work.

11. I have never been taught, trained, or asked to provide input about crop planting or farming decisions. I have never received any training for my work in the fields.

12. Most other Farm Line workers were Black, like me.

13. I did not choose to work on the Farm Line or to participate in compulsory agricultural labor. I did not volunteer or request to work on the Farm Line. I only worked on the Farm Line to avoid serious harm and punishment, like disciplinary confinement.

14. To the best of my knowledge, I have never been paid for my labor. I would not work without compensation if I had a choice.

15. From my review of the disciplinary rules and based on my personal knowledge of Angola's practices, I understand that incarcerated people who disobey prison officials, refuse to work, or fail to meet work quotas can be subject to serious disciplinary action, including disciplinary confinement. Refusal to work can also result in serious legal harm, such as the loss of good time credit and the loss of eligibility to apply for clemency.

16. On several occasions, prison officials threatened to punish me if I stopped working, complained about the unsafe work conditions, or failed to work "efficiently."

17. I am an individual with a disability. Specifically, I was shot above my groin in 2016. As a result, I have nerve damage that causes undue pain in my leg, especially when I have to stand, walk, and squat for long periods. Working in the field exacerbated that severe pain. At times, the pain was so severe that I would have to sit down for some relief. On several occasions, prison officials demanded that I get up and threatened to punish me, including by keeping me in the field all day, if I didn't do it fast enough.

18. The heat and humidity in the fields is extreme and unbearable. I often felt dizzy and nauseous. I've seen other incarcerated men pass out in the heat. I've suffered from blistered hands.

19. Working on the Farm Line exceeds my physical capabilities, is unduly painful, and exacerbates my serious medical condition. It is dangerous for me to work in the fields, especially in high heat and humidity. Prison officials know this, and they know I have a physical disability.

20. I have requested reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and a duty status so I will not be forced to work on the Farm Line. My ARP request for relief was denied at the Second Step in July 2023.

21. If given a meaningful choice, I would not work on the Farm Line.

22. To the best of my knowledge, hundreds of men incarcerated at Angola, if not more, have been forced to work on the Farm Line just this year.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct and based on my personal knowledge.

Executed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, on August 17, 2023.

Damion Thompson

Damion Thompson
#141171

EXHIBIT 8

DECLARATION OF CHRISTOPHER BELL

I, CHRISTOPHER BELL, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify in this matter, and do so based on personal knowledge.

2. I am currently incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, Louisiana. I have been incarcerated there since June 2023. I currently live in Camp D. My DOC number is 495202. I am currently assigned to Farm Line 25.

3. When I first arrived at Angola, prison officials issued me a handbook that included the disciplinary rules.

4. I did not choose to work on the Farm Line. I did not volunteer or request to work on the Farm Line. I only work on the Farm Line to avoid serious harm and punishment. From my review of the disciplinary guidelines and based on my personal knowledge of prison practices, I understand that incarcerated people who disobey prison officials, refuse to work, or fail to meet work quotas can be subject to serious disciplinary action, including disciplinary confinement. Refusal to work can also result in serious legal harm, such as the loss of good time credit and the loss of eligibility to apply for clemency. I also understand, based on prison policy and practice, that I could be reassigned to the Farm Line as punishment for any alleged disciplinary violation, at any time.

5. I have been assigned to Farm Line 25 since I arrived at Angola, even though I have a disability and serious health condition. Specifically, I was diagnosed about two years ago with a hernia. Because of my disability, it is dangerous for me to work in the Angola fields, especially in high heat and humidity. Working in the field exacerbated my herina and made it more painful.

6. Prison authorities know about my medical condition. I have made multiple sick calls and even had a duty status issued by the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center (“Hunt”). That duty status, which prohibited me from lifting more than 15 pounds, was in effect when I was first forced to work the Farm Line in June 2023. On the Farm Line, I regularly had to lift more than 15 pounds. For instance, I had to lift heavy bags of corn, causing me undue pain.

7. I also had a restricted duty status without an expiration date issued by the B.B. Rayburn Correctional Center (“Rayburn”) on 5/15/2023. That duty status stated that I could work with several limitations, including: limited bending, limited squatting, and limited lifting. Officials at Angola have refused to honor this duty status. I have showed it to various guards, and requested a new duty status. These attempts have been futile. On the Farm Line, I regularly have to bend, squat, and lift. This all exacerbates my medical condition and causes me pain.

8. Conditions in the field are brutal and unsafe. The heat and humidity in the fields are unbearable. In addition to feeling undue physical pain because of my hernia, I also sometimes feel light-headed and experience headaches. I have seen others pass out because of the heat in the fields.

9. On Farm Line 25, I work with about 20 to 25 other incarcerated men from about 7:30 a.m. until around 11:30 a.m., five days a week. We were not given tools or equipment. Instead, we use our hands to do tasks like pick potatoes and corn and place them in a large bag. Hauling the large, heavy bags exacerbates my serious medical condition. We are not provided with sunscreen, proper work gloves, proper work boots, sunglasses, a sunhat, or other safety equipment necessary to safely work in the fields.

10. Prison officials, including officials from Prison Enterprises, supervise and control all aspects of my work. These officials are known as “freemen.”

11. I have never been taught, trained, or asked to provide input about crop planting or farming decisions. I have never received any training at all for my Farm Line work.

12. Most Farm Line workers are Black, like me.

13. Prison officials have threatened to punish me if I stopped working or failed to complete a work assignment.

14. If given a meaningful choice, I would not work on the Farm Line.

15. To the best of my knowledge, hundreds of men incarcerated at Angola, if not more, have been forced to work on the Farm Line just this year.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct and based on my personal knowledge.

Executed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, on August 17, 2023.

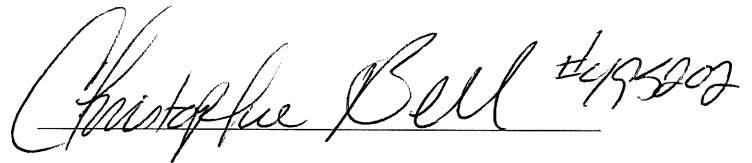
 Christopher Bell

EXHIBIT 9

DECLARATION OF PATRICK RAMIREZ

I, PATRICK RAMIREZ, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify in this matter, and do so based on personal knowledge.

2. I am currently incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola) in Angola, Louisiana. I have been incarcerated there since 2014. I was convicted by a non-unanimous jury in East Baton Rouge Parish. I currently live in Camp D. My DOC number is 449622.

3. When I first arrived at Angola, prison officials issued me a handbook that outlined the disciplinary rules. Based on these disciplinary policies and my personal knowledge of the prison's disciplinary practices, I understand that nearly all incarcerated people must work on the Farm Line when they first arrive at Angola, and that anyone may be reassigned to the Farm Line as punishment for a disciplinary infraction.

4. When I first arrived at Angola, I was put in extended lockdown for several months. From there, I was transferred to the working cell block in Camp D, where I was forced to work the Farm Line. I eventually got a dorm orderly job, but I was sent back to the Farm Line when I got a disciplinary write-up. I have spent a lot of time in lockdown over the past several years.

5. I am an individual with a disability. Specifically, I suffer from bipolar disorder and high blood pressure. The prison knows about my disabilities and prescribes me medications to manage them, including olanzapine, amlodipine, and hydroxyzine. Because of these conditions, it is dangerous for me to work in the Angola fields, especially in high heat and humidity.

6. Conditions on the Farm Line are harsh. Sometimes, tourist busses drive by and take photos of us, like we're slaves on display. We're only paid two cents an hour, if anything at all. Armed guards threaten us if we work too slow or need to take a break. There's no shade, and

people get sick from the heat and humidity. These conditions are so physically and psychologically damaging that I would rather go to the cellblocks or lockdown than work in the field.

7. I have requested reasonable accommodations for my disabilities. I have requested a permanent duty status so I will not be forced to work on the Farm Line. My request for relief was denied.

8. The prison has issued me a “heat precaution” duty status because of my disabilities. That status exempts me from working the Farm Line from May to October. But it does not protect me from being forced to work in the fields at any other time. I believe that I will be forced back into the field in October.

9. I did not choose to work on the Farm Line or to participate in compulsory agricultural labor. I did not volunteer or request to work on the Farm Line. I only work on the Farm Line to avoid serious harm and punishment, like disciplinary confinement and loss of phone time, family visitation, and canteen access. Refusal to work can also result in serious legal harm, such as the loss of good time credit and the loss of eligibility to apply for clemency.

10. From my review of the disciplinary guidelines and based on my personal knowledge of Angola’s practices, I understand that incarcerated people who disobey prison officials, refuse to work, or fail to meet work quotas can be subject to serious disciplinary action, including disciplinary confinement. This has happened to me several times. I have gotten many disciplinary write-ups for refusing to work in the fields. I’ve been punished with disciplinary confinement, loss of phone access, and loss of canteen access.

11. To the best of my recollection, I have never been provided with sunscreen, proper work gloves, proper work boots, sunglasses, or other safety equipment necessary to safely work in the fields.

12. I've seen tractors and other modern farming equipment at Angola. Based on my experience, I believe the agricultural work we are forced to do could be done more efficiently using this equipment.

13. I have never been taught, trained, or asked to provide input about crop planting or farming decisions. I have never received any training at all for my Farm Line work.

14. If given a meaningful choice, I would not work on the Farm Line.

15. To the best of my knowledge, hundreds of men incarcerated at Angola, if not more, have been forced to work on the Farm Line just this year.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, on August 17, 2023.

Patrick Ramirez #449622