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BUILDING TRADES BULLETIN

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New California Law Requires Valley Fever Training by May 1, 2020

A new California law, [AB 203](#) signed in October 2019, aims to protect construction workers in counties with high rates of Valley fever. AB 203 requires construction employers to train their employees on minimizing the risk of Valley fever by May 1, 2020. The law describes eight topics that must be covered by the training. For 2020, the 11 counties where this training is required include Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, and Ventura. Other counties may be added in the future depending on their rates of Valley fever illness.

The California Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Branch (CDPH-OHB) created a Valley Fever Training Guide, [VALLEY FEVER: Tailgate Training Guide for California Construction Workers](#) to assist employers to comply with the new requirement. The guide covers the training topics required by the new law and is an interactive, easy-to-use tool that supervisors, trainers, and health and safety staff can use to train employees. In 2019 the SBCTC hosted two occupational health interns who interviewed union workers infected with Valley fever and worked on developing this tailgate training.

More Information About Valley fever

Valley fever is an infection caused by exposure to a microscopic fungus (*Coccidioides immitis*) which lives in the top 2 to 12 inches of soil. Valley fever is a serious illness that can cause disability or even death if untreated.

Workers are exposed when soil is disturbed by work activities such as excavation, digging, grading, driving vehicles, or environmental conditions such as high winds, that cause the fungal spores to become airborne and potentially inhaled by workers. Construction workers in California's Central Valley, Central Coast, and other locations, who perform this work, or work at job sites where this work is active, are at risk for exposure to the airborne spores.

Resources

Visit the CDPH [OHB work-related Valley fever web page](#) for updates on required training and other Valley fever resources.

CDPH-OHB's March 2020 [Occupational Health Watch](#) newsletter article has information about AB203 and links to resources.