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Behind the Walls: Addressing OSH Disparities in the Carceral System

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January 16, 2025
Standards Board Meeting



Agenda

1.

Current Health and Safety
Conditions for Incarcerated
Workers

2.

The Intersection of Prison
Labor and Climate Change

3.

Real World Implications for
Incarcerated Workers

Introductions



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Indoor Heat Standard





Current Health and Safety Conditions and Hazards for Incarcerated Workers

Impact Data

40k

Prison
Workers

148

Jails and
Prisons

600

Workplace
Injuries

Prison Workplaces



TABLE 1. AGES OF CALIFORNIA'S COUNTY JAILS (LISTED BY DECADE)

Decade constructed	Number of facilities	Total rated capacity	Number of facilities remodeled	Number of beds in facilities not remodeled
Before 1950	8	5,632	7	493
1950s	10	5,366	6	1,562
1960s	19	12,914	9	3,829
1970s	19	7,203	9	4,476
1980s	33	22,782	14	14,552
1990s	33	22,216	4	19,566
2000s	1	768	–	768

SOURCE: Board of State and Community Corrections.

NOTE: Kings County Main County Jail is not included in this table because the BSCC did not list an original construction date. Most of the remodels occurred in the late 1990s and 2000s, with the most recent in 2006.



Heat and its Impact on Workplace Injuries

- When the temperature goes up workplace injuries increases by 5-7% and 10-15%.
- Extreme heat is likely responsible for approximately 20,000 additional workplace injuries annually.
- Between 2001 and 2018, this totals around 360,000 extra injuries to California workers.



The Intersection of

Prison Labor

Climate
Change

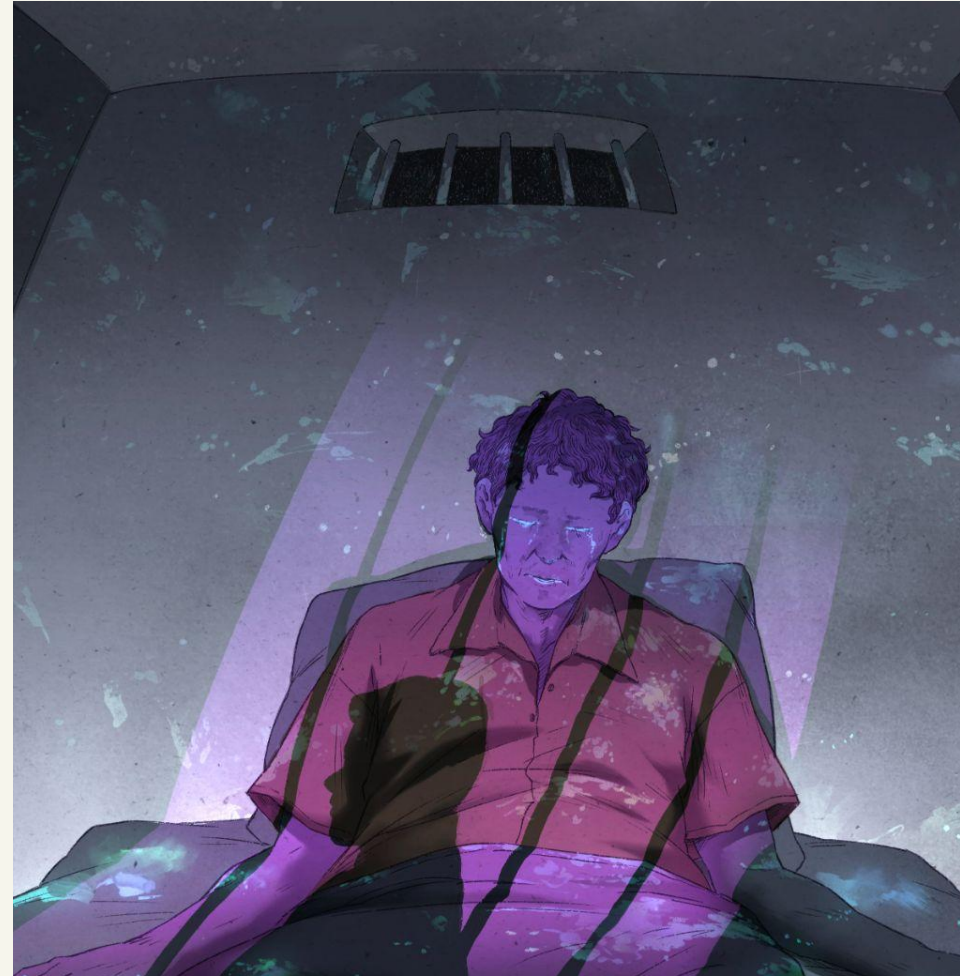
Prison Labor and Climate Change



California Inmate Firefighters



Health Risks and Mortality for Prison Workers



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“ ...it was Saturday morning. Everyone had found out that Adrienne had passed away and they were all distraught about the passing, but then they were also all locked down and they were calling out to us and they were just getting ahold of all of us advocates saying, “We are locked down and the vents are pumping out hot air and we can’t breathe,” and they were saying, “We can’t breathe,” and then women were throwing up, they were having headaches, leg pain.

-Elizabeth “Leesa” Nomura, [Real News Network Interview](#), 7/22/24

Real World Implications for Workers



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Working Conditions on the Inside



Thank You



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