



Danger Behind the Wheel

LSG Sky Chefs Uses Trucks Without Air-Conditioning to Save Money, Putting Driver and Airport Safety at Risk

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UNITEHERE!

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LSG Sky Chefs, owned by Lufthansa, is the largest in-flight catering company in the United States. Its drivers spend hours every day operating large delivery trucks in the most secured areas of major airports across the country. LSG Sky Chefs orders most of its new trucks without air-conditioning to cut costs. In other cases, the company has disabled or removed air-conditioning units from its trucks.

Last summer, an LSG Sky Chefs driver passed out from dehydration and caused a crash at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. He was driving a truck without air-conditioning.

This summer, a powerful heat wave in the Southwest has already grounded flights in Phoenix and caused nine consecutive days of 110 temperatures in Las Vegas.

UNITE HERE conducted a nationwide survey of 386 LSG Sky Chefs workers and found that:

- 95% of surveyed workers reported that the trucks they normally work in do not have working air-conditioning.
- 63% reported feeling dizzy or sick because of the heat while working.
- 66% reported not receiving heat safety training in the past five years.
- 65% reported that they have felt unsafe while driving because of the heat.



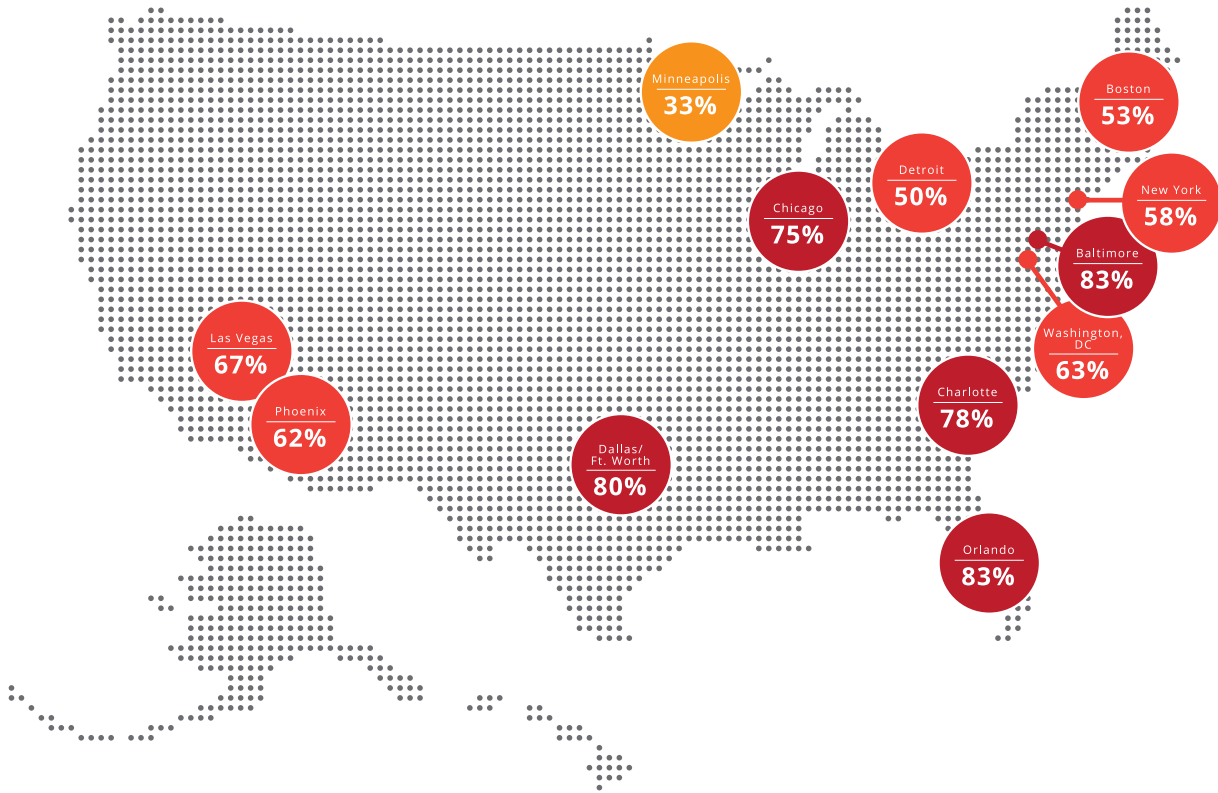
CHRISTOPHER MAYS

LSG Sky Chefs driver, Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Services flights by United, American and Delta

“One day last summer when I was working, I was driving back from the airport. I felt my body just tense up and I passed out. I went to stop the truck, but I couldn’t and I hit a wall. I was at Gate 220. My driver behind me and another driver pulled me out. And then all I heard was the ambulances and them trying to wake me up...

The ambulance took me to the hospital. I was there because I passed out and because of dehydration... I returned to work three days later... I believe air-conditioning would have prevented this.”

NATIONWIDE, SURVEYED LSG SKY CHEFS DRIVERS REPORTED FEELING UNSAFE WHILE DRIVING BECAUSE OF HEAT



LSG Sky Chefs' decision to use trucks without air-conditioning is putting workers' health at risk and jeopardizing airport safety. LSG Sky Chefs should add air-conditioning to all its trucks and work together with the airlines, airport leadership and local elected officials to ensure safety for all airport workers and passengers.

BACKGROUND

A record-breaking 234 million passengers are projected to fly on US airlines this summer – up by 15% since 2013.ⁱ With demand still rising, US airlines are experiencing an unprecedented boom in profits following a series of mergers. Last year alone, the US carriers - including United, American, and Delta - made a collective \$13.5 billion profit.ⁱⁱ But despite soaring profits, most LSG Sky Chefs drivers who serve the airlines' passengers are working in trucks without air-conditioning this summer.

“YOU CAN'T CONCENTRATE ON DRIVING BECAUSE IT'S TOO HOT.”

—Joey Cabungcal, Chicago LSG Sky Chefs Driver working in a truck without air conditioning.

LSG Sky Chefs drivers perform physically demanding jobs as they load carts of supplies from catering facilities into their trucks and from their trucks onto the planes. Most of their shift is spent outdoors and exposed to heat during the summer. They are required to wait in their trucks on the airport ramp for planes to arrive. LSG Sky Chefs drivers reported skipping breaks under pressure from management. Some also reported that water is not always accessible to them because of company

policies that prohibit carrying water inside of trucks. When delays occur, their time exposed to the heat becomes even longer. Drivers have suffered heat-related symptoms while on the job, including dizziness, weakness, dehydration and even passing out behind the wheel.

Last year, 94 people in the US died from extreme heat, more than double the number in 2015.ⁱⁱⁱ This summer, a powerful heat wave in the Southwest has already grounded flights in Phoenix and caused nine consecutive days of 110 temperatures in Las Vegas.^{iv} As heat levels rise, urgent action is needed to protect airport workers, whose jobs require them to spend hours each day in trucks without air-conditioning.

“WE’RE NOT ASKING FOR THEM TO INSTALL CD PLAYERS. THIS IS HEALTH. [IT’S] EVIL TO... TAKE THE AIR-CONDITIONING OUT OF THE TRUCKS BECAUSE THEY DON’T WANT YOU TO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF AIR.”

—Bobby Kirkpatrick, LSG Sky Chefs Driver
Charlotte Douglas International Airport

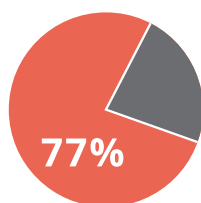


DRIVERS LACK AIR-CONDITIONING AND FREQUENTLY SUFFER HEAT ILLNESS

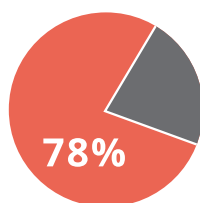
- 95% of respondents reported that the trucks they normally work in do not have working air-conditioning.
- Workers reported spending an average of 5.5 hours in their trucks per shift.

The overwhelming majority of drivers did not have air-conditioning units in their trucks. Workers reported that new trucks are normally delivered without air-conditioning units. In addition, LSG Sky Chefs has stated that in some cases, the company disabled or removed the air-conditioning units in newly purchased trucks. Only a very small number of LSG Sky Chefs vehicles did have air-conditioning. Eighteen drivers (approximately five percent of respondents) reported working in vehicles with working air-conditioning units.

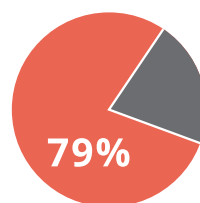
63% OF RESPONDENTS NATIONWIDE REPORTED FEELING DIZZY OR SICK BECAUSE OF THE HEAT WHILE WORKING. AT SOME AIRPORTS, THE NUMBER WAS EVEN HIGHER:



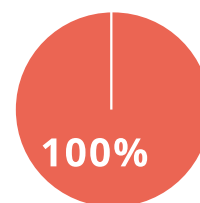
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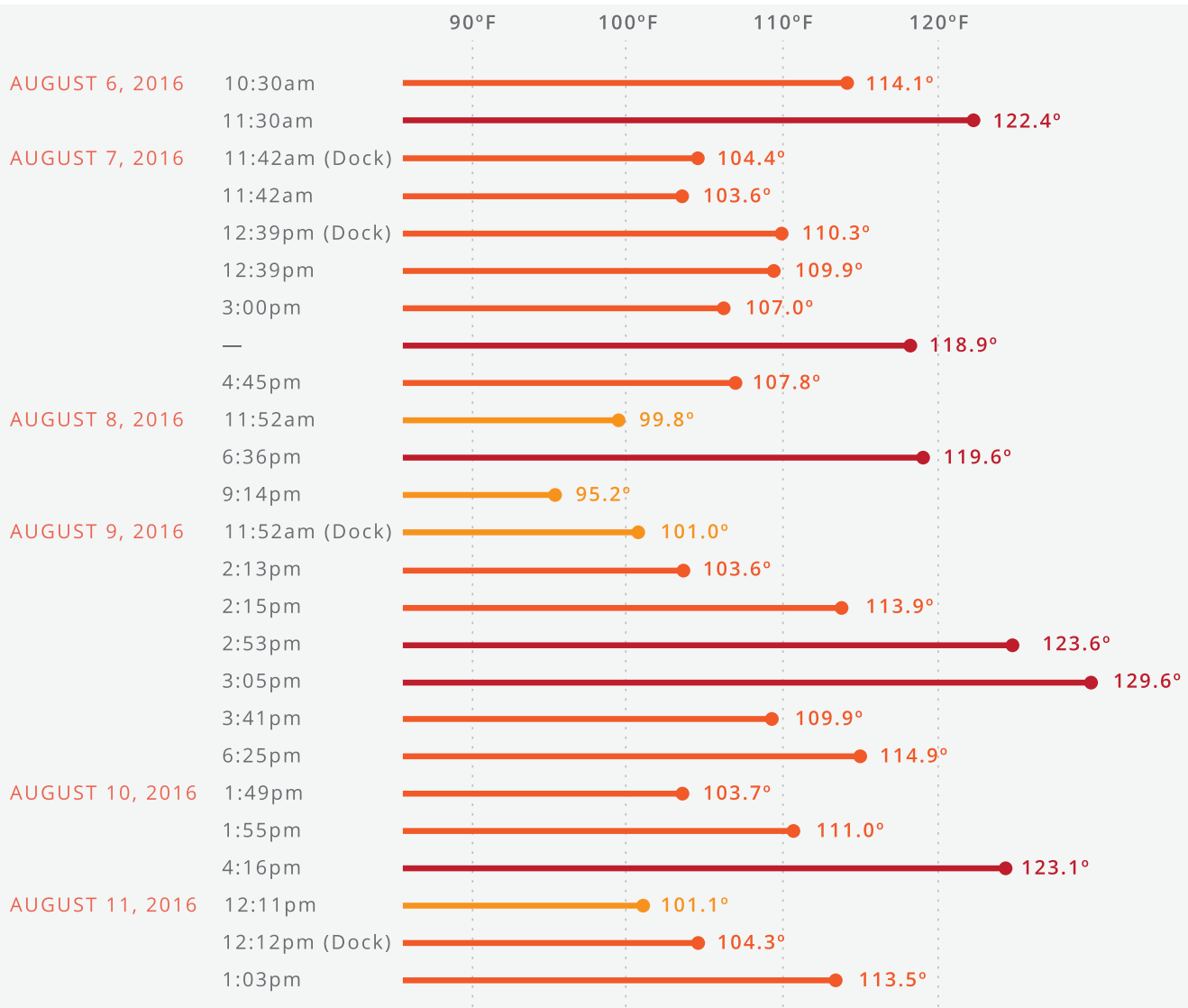
CLT

LSG Sky Chefs' decision to use trucks without air-conditioning is putting workers' health at risk and jeopardizing airport safety. LSG Sky Chefs should add air-conditioning to all its trucks and work together with the airlines, airport leadership and local elected officials to ensure safety for all airport workers and passengers.

DRIVERS ARE EXPOSED TO DANGEROUS HEAT LEVELS

From August 6, 2016 to August 11, 2016, temperature and humidity readings were taken inside LSG Sky Chefs catering trucks at Dallas/ Fort Worth International Airport. These readings were used to calculate the heat index.^v Out of a total of 25 heat index readings, 84% were in the "High" or "Very High to Extreme" levels of risk of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) risk levels.^{vi}

HEAT INDEX MEASUREMENTS SHOWED "HIGH" AND "VERY HIGH TO EXTREME" RISK AT DALLAS/FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



*OSHA HEAT ILLNESS RISK LEVELS BY HEAT INDEX



LSG SKY CHEFS RESTRICTS ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER

- 38% of respondents reported that they do not carry drinking water with them inside of their trucks.
- 47% of respondents reported that company policy prohibits carrying drinking water inside of trucks.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) identify low fluid consumption as one of the factors that increase the risk of occupational heat illness.^{vii} Ensuring unrestricted access to drinking water is a necessary step that should be part of a broader, comprehensive heat safety plan.

The survey responses revealed serious confusion about LSG Sky Chefs' policy regarding access to drinking water among the drivers. Drivers reported spending hours every day in their trucks driving, waiting and loading and unloading on the airport ramp. During this time when they are away from LSG Sky Chef facilities, it can be more difficult to access drinking water. Almost half of surveyed workers reported that their understanding of company policy is that they are not allowed to carry drinking water in their trucks.

Workers recently requested clarification on the company's policy regarding carrying drinking water inside of trucks, using the grievance procedure in their collective bargaining agreement. On July 20, 2017, in response to the workers' grievance, the company stated that the policy varies by facility. The survey found that:

- In **Boston**, 50% believed they were not allowed to have water in their trucks.
- In **Chicago**, 54% believed they were not allowed to have water in their trucks.
- In **Dallas/ Fort Worth**, 61% believed they were not allowed to have water in their trucks.
- In **Phoenix**, 72% believed they were not allowed to have water in their trucks.

"SOMETIMES WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO EAT BECAUSE THE FLIGHTS ARE BACK TO BACK AND THEY DON'T MAKE TIME FOR US TO TAKE A BREAK... WE MUST DO THE WORK. AND WE MUST DO IT ON TIME, SO WE DON'T CAUSE A DELAY. IF WE CAUSE A DELAY, THEY SEND US HOME. IN OTHER WORDS, WE GET SUSPENDED"

—María Villareal, Dallas/Fort Worth

MOST DRIVERS SKIP BREAKS UNDER PRESSURE TO AVOID DELAYS

- 82% of respondents reported that they have skipped their break while working.

In addition to access to drinking water, breaks are necessary for working safely in the heat. On average, workers reported servicing more than eight flights per shift, and spending approximately five and half hours per shift in their trucks on the airport ramp. Strenuous physical work increases the risk of heat illness, and regular breaks should be an important

element in a comprehensive heat safety plan.

MOST DRIVERS LACK HEAT SAFETY TRAINING

- 66% of respondents reported that they had not received heat safety training from LSG Sky Chefs managers or supervisors in the past five years.
- 78% of respondents reported that they do not know the company's policy for how they should respond if someone shows a symptom of heat illness or heat stroke on the job.

Survey results showed that most workers do not feel sufficiently prepared by the company's heat training to respond in the event of an emergency. Despite incidents of heat-related medical emergencies on the job at multiple LSG Sky Chefs locations, a majority of workers reported receiving no training in the last five years. If training procedures are in place, these results indicate that the training has not been effective.

WORKERS REPORTED CONCERN ABOUT FOOD TEMPERATURES

- 74% of surveyed workers reported that they have been concerned about the safety of passenger food because of the heat in their trucks.

Workers reported following company procedures to regulate the temperature of passenger food, including in some instances the use of wet ice and dry ice. Most respondents, however, still expressed concern about food safety.



MARÍA VILLARREAL

LSG Sky Chefs driver, Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport

“One day last summer, when I got back to the kitchen after working for seven hours, I felt really sick. **I had been driving a sixteen-foot truck without air-conditioning, servicing American Airlines flights. I was dizzy. My face was red and I was hot. I started taking the carts out of the truck but I felt**

like I was going to collapse, so I stopped. My head was spinning. My vision was getting blurry.

I sat down next to the carts. Then when some people saw me like that, they told the supervisors. The supervisor came and put a lot of ice on me. I was about to faint and I could barely walk. He grabbed me and took me to the office. He covered me with very cold towels. He threw a lot of water and ice all over my body. I was wet all over. I was really scared. I still had a headache and my face was still red. After sitting for more than half an hour, I felt better.

They didn't offer a medic or anything. They didn't call an ambulance. That was the only thing they did – give me water and put ice on my forehead and cold little towels. I returned to work the next day doing the same job as before, in the same heat.”

DESPITE WARNINGS, LSG SKY CHEFS CONTINUES TO EXPOSE WORKERS TO HEAT HAZARDS

LSG Sky Chefs has been repeatedly informed by its workers that working in trucks without air-conditioning is putting them at greater risk for heat illness.

In 2014 and 2015, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued reports recommending that Sky Chefs should provide air-conditioning in their trucks after performing Health Hazard Evaluations at Sky Chefs' locations in Detroit (in 2011)^{viii} and New York (in 2013).^{ix} To date, LSG Sky Chefs has not implemented these recommendations:

“ENSURE THAT NEW TRUCKS HAVE AIR-CONDITIONING AND REPAIR SYSTEMS IN EXISTING VEHICLES.”

—NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation Report on LSG Sky Chefs DTW Facility, 2014

“MAKE SURE ALL NEW TRUCKS HAVE AIR-CONDITIONING.”

—NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation Report on LSG Sky Chefs JFK Facility, 2015

In 2017, LSG Sky Chefs workers used the grievance procedure established in their collective bargaining agreement to raise the issue of heat safety and the lack of air-conditioning to management. On July 20, 2017, in response to the workers' grievance, the company stated that they would not provide air-conditioning in their trucks, citing cost.



MARVIN ROMERO

LSG Sky Chefs driver, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport

“On July 8, 2017, I was servicing a Lufthansa international flight. I got there about 15 mins before the plane arrived. While I was waiting in the truck, **I started feeling a headache and pain on the back-left side on my neck. I drank some water. I started catering the plane, but the pain didn't go away.**

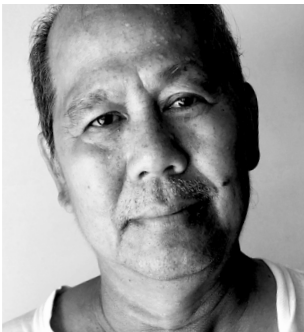
Suddenly, it felt like electricity flowing from the back of my neck down my arm. I thought, 'This is not normal.' I stopped and I closed my eyes. My coworker began to walk away and I pressed my horn and yelled his name. I told him, 'I don't feel okay. Let's get out of this area and ask for some help.' He said, 'OK, just stay there let me drive beside you.' So, we took both trucks. I parked and turned off the engine.

After that, I just remember the ambulance coming, the paramedics talking to me and taking me into the ambulance. They had to carry me because I was all dizzy...

We went to the emergency room. When the doctor walked in, and he said, 'Well, Marvin, looks like you're going to be okay. It's not a heart related incident. **Everything is related to the heat. You have heat exhaustion.**'”

IT'S TIME FOR SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR LSG SKY CHEFS DRIVERS

- **LSG Sky Chefs** should immediately add functioning air-conditioning to all its trucks, as recommended by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Other measures can reduce the risk of heat illness while working in high temperatures, such as rest breaks and unrestricted access to water. However, there is no substitute for controlling the temperature, especially in the a uniquely hazardous occupational environment of an airport.
- **Lufthansa, as the owner of LSG Sky Chefs**, should ensure that all trucks have working air-conditioning and all necessary steps are taken for retraining staff and implementing adequate heat safety procedures.
- **American, Delta, and United Airlines, as the largest clients of LSG Sky Chefs** in the United States, should require that all contractors' trucks servicing their planes have functioning air-conditioning.
- **Airport Officials** should require that all trucks operating at their airports have functioning air-conditioning.
- **Local Elected Leaders** should dialogue with both employees and employers about heat safety for airport workers. They should call on LSG Sky Chefs, Lufthansa and the airlines to work together to ensure all airport trucks have functioning air-conditioning. Where appropriate, they should call for investigations into airport safety risks created by a lack of air-conditioning in LSG Sky Chefs' trucks. The recent accident in Phoenix should be a wake-up call to local leaders. They should not wait for a tragedy before they intervene.



“WE NEED FOR EVERY TRUCK TO HAVE AIR-CONDITIONING. WE ARE WORKING LONG DAYS IN THE HEAT.”

—Hung Dang, Dallas/Fort Worth
LSG Sky Chefs Driver

METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this report was gathered from a written survey, in-depth one-on-one interviews, and temperature and humidity measurements. In July 2017, a total of 386 written surveys were collected from LSG Sky Chefs drivers and drivers' helpers who work in trucks at fifteen major airports in the United States: Boston Logan International Airport (BOS), Baltimore Washington International Airport (BWI), Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT), Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA), Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW), Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD), John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), McCarran International Airport (LAS), Orlando International Airport (MCO), Miami International Airport (MIA), Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP), O'Hare International Airport (ORD), Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX), and Tampa International Airport (TPA). The survey included questions about their working conditions, heat exposure, and heat safety training. In addition, in-depth one-on-one interviews were also conducted in July 2017 with drivers who recently experienced heat-related medical emergencies on the job. In August 2016, temperature and humidity readings were taken inside catering trucks at DFW Airport.

ABOUT UNITE HERE

UNITE HERE represents the majority of contracted airline catering workers in the United States. The union represents over 15,000 airline catering workers, employees of Gate Gourmet, Flying Food Group and LSG Sky Chefs, at 51 airports across the country.

ENDNOTES

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- IX. NIOSH. Health Hazard Evaluation Report: Evaluation of Ergonomic Risk Factors, Thermal Exposures, and Job Stress at an Airline Catering Facility. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2011-0131-3221.pdf>.