

IT'S NOT COOL!

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK IN A HEATWAVE

TEMPERATURES ARE RISING

In 2022 the UK passed 40°C for the first time in recorded history, and it's not getting any cooler. Every workplace in the UK now faces an unprecedented health and safety crisis. The government and employers should act now.

When it's too hot to work you risk heat stroke, heat exhaustion or stress, and dehydration. You are more likely to get hurt as sweaty conditions and dips in concentration can lead to accidents.

DID YOU KNOW?

The UK has a maximum legal temperature for transporting livestock but not for workplaces.

Spain and Germany have already set 27°C and 26°C as maximum indoor workplace temperatures.

PREPARE FOR THE HEAT

When indoor temperatures exceed 24°C it's crucial to take steps to make your workplace safer. It is not safe to work above 30°C. For strenuous work the maximum should be 27°C.

Don't wait for heatwaves, the climate crisis means it's time to prepare. Employers can work together with Health & Safety reps or committees to prepare your workplace for extreme heat by putting policies and PPE in place now.

Things you could put in place for when your workplace temperature goes over 24°C:

- ✧ Provide cool drinking water, fans, and shade around the workplace.
- ✧ Increase ventilation and use blinds or move staff away from windows and heat sources.
- ✧ Relax dress codes and provide sunscreen and hats for those working outside.
- ✧ Offer additional rest breaks in a cool room and adjust shifts to avoid travel in peak heat.
- ✧ Set a maximum working temperature and provide paid leave if it is breached.

WHEN THE HEAT STRIKES

If your workplace temperature goes above:
24°C Health and safety reps should ask for adjustments to be implemented.

30°C Put safety first and take steps to avoid danger to workers' health.

If you have a reasonable belief that working or travelling to work will result in a 'serious or imminent danger' to the health and safety of you or others around you then you have the right to refuse to work.

Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996

provides *all* employees protection from detriment (i.e. dismissal, disciplinary or a pay cut) if they withdraw from and refuse to return to a workplace that is unsafe and in their opinion represents a real risk of 'serious and imminent danger' which they could not be expected to avert. Union members may be able to access additional support or advice in exercising this right.

YOU CAN FIND MORE ADVICE AND RESOURCES ON HOW TO IMPROVE
WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY IN A HEATWAVE BY SIGNING UP:

HEATSTRIKE.UK