

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDANCE REGISTER		Guidance	G018
 PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY	Working in Hot Temperatures Guidance	Issue	1
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Introduction

This document is intended to provide information on ways in which managers can attempt to control the uncomfortable effects of particularly warm weather on workplaces and activities. When periods of warm weather or hot working temperatures are causing individuals particular discomfort, colleagues should notify their Line Manager immediately.

Legal Requirements

There currently exists no legal limit for the maximum permitted working temperature. Regulation 7 of The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, in respect of indoor workplaces, states that *“During working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable.”*

In such context, a reasonable temperature for a workplace depends on work activity and the environmental conditions of the workplace.

Control Measures

The following section provides examples of the type of control measures which can be implemented by managers in an attempt to mitigate the effects of working in hot temperatures, particularly during prolonged periods of warm weather. Please note that the list below is not exhaustive, and responsible managers must consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the control measures for the environments and contexts in which they are to be implemented.

Possible control measures in such situations will include, but will not be limited to:

- Ensuring that windows are open to promote air movements throughout the building and reduce heat build-up during the day (*Note: Building security should also be considered when unoccupied, and windows shut during such periods e.g. at the end of each working day*).
- Moving or locating workstations away from direct sunlight and any objects which may radiate heat.
- Ensure that blinds, curtains or reflective window film are available and in good working order to reduce heating effects.
- Relax any formal dress code for staff which may exacerbate discomfort e.g. permit smart, light and loose fitting clothing, rather than suits and ties (*Note: Any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will continue to be required and used for identified tasks*).
- Ensuring the availability of cooler spaces and comfortable environments to be used by staff during break periods.
- Consider the availability and potential effectiveness of oscillating fans. Due to COVID transmission risk, fans should not be used in shared and poorly ventilated spaces.
- Ensuring a plentiful supply and unrestricted access to drinking water is available.
- Permitting more regular rest breaks during the working day, to reduce the length of time that an employee is exposed to hot conditions without rest.
- Consider job rotation of tasks aimed at limiting the amount of physical activities undertaken during warm periods. It should also be acknowledged that work activities may take longer to complete than normal during periods of warm weather.

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- Consider the additional impact of warm weather on colleagues with particular circumstances, such as new or expectant mothers, individuals with particular illnesses or taking specified medications.
- The hire of temporary portable air conditioning units during periods of prolonged warm weather can be facilitated, in consultation with the Estates, Facilities and Residences Department.

Personal Control Measures

Individuals may consider the following personal control measures during periods of warm weather:

- Wear light coloured and loose fitting clothing.
- Avoid caffeine and very sweet drinks, which can dehydrate the body.
- Drink and encourage others to drink plenty of water.
- Use available blinds or curtains to reduce the heat from direct sunlight.
- Ensure that all non-essential electrical equipment is turned off when not in use, to reduce radiated heat.
- Notify your Line Manager immediately if you begin to feel unwell.

Outdoor Control Measures

Colleagues undertaking work outside during periods of warm weather should also take additional control measures to limit exposure to the sun. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advise that workers heed the following guidelines to protect themselves from the sun:

- Keep your top on;
- Wear a hat with a brim or a flap that covers the ears and the back of the neck;
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, during your breaks, and especially at lunch time;
- Use a high factor sunscreen of at least SPF15 on any exposed skin;
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration;
- Check your skin regularly for any unusual moles or spots. See a doctor promptly if you find anything that is changing in shape, size or colour, itching or bleeding.

Further information

Managing Workplace Temperatures: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal/managers.htm>

Sun Safety: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/sunprotect.htm>