

Risks to workers from extreme heat must be managed

- Heat health alert issued until Tuesday 23 June
- Employers have legal duties to protect workers from extreme heat
- Workers should talk to their employer if the temperature isn't comfortable

Employers need to act now to make sure their workers are protected as a heat health alert has been issued for parts of the country until Tuesday 23 June.

That's the message from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the country's workplace regulator, as summer arrives in the UK.

The regulator sees a surge in people seeking advice in periods of hot weather and, following the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) issuing the alert, is calling on employers to plan for and support those working in extreme heat. The regulator says doing so will keep workers healthy and safe while also maintaining productivity.

Employers must assess risks to the health and safety of their workers by law, including risks from extreme weather such as heatwaves. While there is no legal maximum temperature for workplaces, heat is classed as a hazard and should be treated like other hazards.

HSE says everyone – whether working indoors or outdoors – is at risk and employers should discuss with workers changes to manage the risk.

John Rowe, Deputy Director for Technical Support and Engagement for the Health and Safety Executive, said: "Last summer should have been a wake-up call for all employers. If we continue to experience hotter summers this could have a big impact on the workforce of this country, affecting everything from health of workers to productivity on construction sites.

"The risks to workers from extreme heat must be properly assessed. Practical steps can include providing adequate ventilation and shade and allowing enough breaks for workers to cool down. We provide detailed guidance on our website [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk).

"We know all employers are under pressure and we don't want to add to their burden but it's vital they think hard now about simple and cheap measures they can put in place to support workers should we see extreme heat again this summer."

Simple measures to consider include:

- Making sure workplace windows can be opened or closed to prevent hot air from circulating or building up.
- Using blinds or reflective film on workplace windows to shade workers from the sun.

- Placing workstations away from direct sunlight and heat sources.
- Putting insulation around hot pipes and machinery.
- Offering flexible working patterns so workers can work at cooler times of the day.
- Providing free access to drinking water.
- Relaxing dress codes if possible.
- Providing weather-appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Encouraging workers to remove personal protective equipment when resting (ideally in shaded areas) to cool off.
- Sharing information about the symptoms of heat stress and what to do if someone is affected.

Ends

Further information:

- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. hse.gov.uk
- HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
- HSE guidance can be found at: Temperature (hse.gov.uk)
- The UKHSA has issued a heat health alert for parts of the country until Tuesday 23 June 2026. Further information is available at ukhsa.gov.uk
- HSE is progressing the review of guidance and associated code of practice (ACOP) for the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, ensuring our guidance reflects a modern workplace.
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 place an obligation on employers to provide a 'reasonable' temperature in indoor workplaces. Detailed guidance is available on HSE's website including information on measures that can be taken to improve thermal comfort.
- There is a legal obligation under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 for all employers to make a suitable assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their workers and take action where necessary to minimise those risks as far as reasonably practicable. This would include the risks from extreme weather events, such as heatwaves.