

## Working in Hot Weather

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has issued a Level 4 alert for parts of the UK. Temperatures are forecast to reach 40°C on Monday 18 July and Tuesday 19 July.

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) has urged employers to make sure their workers are protected from the sun and heat following the heat health alert. Employers have a duty to keep the temperature at a comfortable level and provide clean and fresh air.

The BVU calls on employers to make sure workers are protected from the sun and heat. Working in hot weather can lead to dehydration, muscle cramps, rashes, fainting, and – in the most extreme cases – loss of consciousness.

The TUC says employers can help their workers by:

- **Sun protection:** Prolonged sun exposure is dangerous for outdoor workers, so employers should provide sunscreen.
- **Allowing flexible working:** Giving staff the chance to come in earlier or stay later will let them avoid the stifling and unpleasant conditions of the rush hour commute. Employers should also consider enabling staff to work from home while it is hot.
- **Keeping workplace buildings cool:** Workplaces can be kept cooler and more bearable by taking simple steps such as opening windows, using fans, moving staff away from windows or sources of heat.
- **Climate-proofing workplaces:** Preparing our buildings for increasingly hot weather, by installing ventilation, air-cooling and energy efficiency measures.
- **Temporarily relaxing their workplace dress codes:** Encouraging staff to work in more casual clothing than normal will help them keep cool.
- **Keeping staff comfortable:** Allowing staff to take frequent breaks and providing a supply of cold drinks will all help keep workers cool.
- **Talking and listening to staff and their union:** Staff will have their own ideas about how best to cope with the excessive heat.
- **Sensible hours and shaded areas for outdoor workers:** Outside tasks should be scheduled for early morning and late afternoon, not between 11am-3pm when UV radiation levels and temperatures are highest. Canopies/shades should be provided where possible.

There's no law on maximum working temperatures. During working hours the temperature in all indoor workplaces must be 'reasonable' but levels set out in the workplace regulations are not law. With climate change bringing higher temperatures to the UK, the government needs a plan on how to adapt and keep workers safe.

Other countries, including Germany, Spain and China, have clear health and safety rules setting maximum temperatures. We would like ministers to introduce a new absolute maximum indoor temperature to indicate when work should stop.

**We need a maximum working temperature now. Sign the petition**

<https://www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/we-need-a-maximum-working-temperature>