



# COOL IT CAMPAIGN

**THE RECENT RECORD-BREAKING TEMPERATURES** have been a real eye opener for our industry about the importance of planning for what is now predicted to become 'normal' as a result of climate change.

We have been calling for maximum working temperatures of 30°C [27°C for those doing strenuous manual tasks].

Health, Safety and Environment workplace committees should be putting in weather-based plans in good time.

**Hot Weather plans** should be discussed November/December for the following year and **Winter plans** around July/August.

“What can we do with the weather... its going to happen... we can't control it...” **Is that something you have heard from management?**

We believe the following or minimum requirements your employer should put in place

- ❑ A **Thermometer** must be provided so that workers can check the temperature in any workplace inside the building. The availability of thermometers is covered by regulation. [We also advise Safety representatives to take temperature checks in relation to accidents or incidents in the workplace.]
- ❑ Workers should be aware that employers have a **duty of care**, and a *legal obligation to protect their health*, ensuring working temperatures are reasonable, comfortable, and safe.
- ❑ **Temperatures exceeding 24°C** present a serious risk of *sunstroke, heat stress and sunburn*. Working in hot weather can also lead to dehydration, tiredness, muscle cramps, rashes, fainting and, in extreme cases, *loss of consciousness*.

Employers must work with union health and safety reps to introduce measures to protect staff – the following describes our *minimum* requirements.

### **Outdoor work**

- ❑ Avoiding outside tasks between **11.00am – 3.00pm** – when the temperature (and *risks*) are highest.
- ❑ Provide **sunscreen** and advice on the need for protection (available in other languages for migrant workers).
- ❑ Allow staff to take plenty of breaks and provide a supply of **drinking water**.
- ❑ Provide *canopies or coverings* over open areas and *shaded areas* for breaks.
- ❑ Provide lightweight **protective clothing**, including *hats*.

## Driving

- ❑ Any driver suffering from heat-induced **fatigue** is a risk to *themselves and other people*.
- ❑ Vehicles used for long journeys should be temporarily taken out of use if they cannot sustain a reasonable temperature.

## Indoor work

Indoor workplaces can also become dangerously hot. **TUC advice is that nobody should be working indoors where temperatures exceed 30°C.**

At 24°C employers must take action to cool the air, and other measures including:

- ❑ Using **fans** or **other mechanisms** (including adequate ventilation) to cool the air.
- ❑ Relaxing dress codes and uniform policies.
- ❑ Allowing rest breaks and adjusting shifts to avoid travelling in peak heat.
- ❑ Moving workspaces away from windows and other heat sources, using blinds to block out sun.
- ❑ Providing cool drinking water.

## Maximum temperatures

**Employers must ensure working temperatures are 'reasonable'**. The TUC believes employers must act when indoor temperatures exceed **24°C**, with **30°C** *an absolute maximum*.

## SPF is PPE

Sunburn and complications from UVA radiation are a risk to health – outdoor workers are *three times more likely* to develop skin cancer than the general working population.

Sunscreen creates a barrier between the worker and the risk and should be considered PPE. Employers should provide sunscreen with an SPF of **at least 30**, free of charge to all outdoor workers.

## The RIGHT TO REFUSE

Section 44 of the **Employment Rights Act 1996** provides workers protection from detriment (i.e. dismissal, disciplinary or a pay cut) if they withdraw from and to refuse to return to a workplace that is unsafe. Workers are entitled to remain away from the workplace if – in their opinion – the prevailing circumstances represent a real risk of ‘serious and imminent danger’ which they could not be expected to avert.

**The TUC says workers should seek advice from their union before using their rights under Section 44.**



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## How does our Government compare with others?



US regulations say working temperatures should not go beyond **24°C**



Spain guidelines: working temp must not go beyond **27°C** indoors or **25°C** for physical activity.



In Germany, **26°C** is generally considered the maximum for indoor work.



In China, when temperatures reach **37°C**, outdoor work is banned during the hottest three hours of the day and at **40°C** it must *stop altogether*.



In the UAE, outdoor work is banned entirely between the hours of **12:30** and **15:00**