



Is it too hot for Comfort?

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (NI) 1993 states that employers must ensure the temperature in all workplaces, inside buildings is “reasonable” during working hours. This means providing reasonable comfort without the need for special clothing.

What is “reasonable” will obviously be subjective and depend on individual comfort, as well as the nature of the workplace and work activities. The Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) says that workrooms should normally be 16 degrees Celsius for most types of work, and at least 13 degrees Celsius for work involving considerable physical effort. For most kinds of work the acceptable range of thermal comfort is between 16 degrees Celsius and 24 degrees Celsius. Further advice on thermal comfort is available on the [HSE website](#).

Where the workplace temperature is likely to be hot, employers should consider some of the following measures:

- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day;
- Provide more frequent rest breaks and introduce shading to rest areas;
- Provide free access to cool drinking water;
- Introduce shading in areas where individuals are working;
- Personal protective equipment should be specially designed for work in hot environments. e.g. light coloured loose fitting/absorbent over clothing. If the over-clothing has to be impermeable e.g. to protect against chemicals consideration should be given to the need for means of cooling.
- Encourage the removal of personal protective equipment when resting to help encourage heat loss;
- Educate workers about recognising the early symptoms of heat stress.

Working in the Sun

Turning to outdoor work we would like to remind members and reps that hot weather brings additional dangers to the construction industry and members out on site visits. It is essential that employers ensure sites are safe and proper facilities are provided during hot weather working. If workers do not believe their site is safe they should stop work immediately until problems are resolved.

Extra risk assessments should be carried out during extreme weather, to make sure that workers’ health and safety are not put at risk.

NHS has produced guidance on recognising the [signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#), how to spot dehydration, how you can cool someone down and importantly how to prevent over exposure to excessive heat.

