

GENDER-PROOFING H&S

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PHYSIOLOGY

- The science of how the human body works.
- 1. Male, 25 yrs, 5ft 7ins....Vital Capacity, approx.
 - 5.0-5.5 litres.
- 2. Female, 25yrs,5ft 7ins....Vital Capacity, approx.
 - 4.0-4.5litres



Fire and Rescue Service, N.Ireland
Recruitment of personnel

1960....Males only need apply

1979....Males & Females, must be, at least 5ft 7 ins in
Height

2000....Must Complete a Fitness test.

- Following the fitness test:

45% of Females disqualified due to running speeds of more than the target speed

Or

Ability to carry out Vertical Ladder test,

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- Found to be Discriminatory under the Sex Discrimination (NI Order) 1976.
 - Indirect Discrimination: To impose a Practice, Provision or Criteria which may disproportionately disadvantage Women over men.
 - H&S response? Ladder was too heavy for either sex.

- **2. Thermal Comfort**
- Lowest temp. For the Workplace??
- Physiology of calories for heat:
- $\text{Calories} + \text{Metabolism} = \text{Fuel (Substrate)}$
- Substrate is used by the Mitochondria in the cells to create Energy +Heat.

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- MALES...Use calories differently than females, making larger amounts of energy and heat per Calorie.
 - The result, generally warmer than the female and in times of starvation will run out of substrate faster.

 - FEMALES... Use calories also but store more for feeding young and generally feel colder.
 - (Check hands, feet and noses of females for evidence on a cold night).



- **HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS**

- Need to appreciate the difficulty this produces in the newer “Wide open, Hot- desking environment.”
- Potentially, men in Hawaiian shirts,
- Women in Blankets and gloves at the Desk!

- **Thermal comfort is an increasing problem and particularly where office temperature is controlled remotely.**

HORMONES

- The issue of Hormonal change, Pregnancy and eventually Menopause, plays havoc with the Female physiology with a list of symptoms, such as, Hot flushes, fatigue, fainting, poor appetite, poor sleep.
- These will and indeed do affect how well a woman will feel and work, and how well she can adapt to the changing workplace environment.
- **Risk Assessments need to be amended to address this.**

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- Postal Service in N.Ireland, recruiting Postmen and women to deliver the mail.
 - Mail bags weight resulted in 2 of every 3 women leaving the service within 2 months.
 - Attempts to divide the bags into 2 drops proved useless.
 - Again, potentially Discriminatory
 - H&S answer.... Trolleys for both sexes.

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- **FINALLY,**
 - **Personal Protective equipment MUST be “Fit For Purpose” HSE.**
 - **ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!!**