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GMB

PROTECTING YOU
AT WORK

JOIN GMB NOW
SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES
ARE SAFER IN GMB

Join GMB, the union for all safety representatives, and ensure you receive the same protection and advice as thousands of your colleagues.



SAFETY REP'S CHECKLIST

- | | YES | NO |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Have workplace risk assessments identified problems with hot temperatures in the workplace? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have GMB safety reps been involved in the risk assessments? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you work outdoors— | | |
| Are you supplied with loose fitting clothes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you supplied with hats and neck protection? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you supplied with sunscreen? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the work planned so that it is possible to work in the shade during the hottest parts of the day? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are regular breaks encouraged? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are cool drinks available? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If you work indoors— | | |
| Are there thermometers available to enable you to monitor the temperature? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are internal heat sources insulated properly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are windows shaded to cut down direct sunlight? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has the building been properly insulated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can any clothing/uniform policy be relaxed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is there provision for cool drinks and cooler areas for breaks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can an agreed maximum internal temperature be negotiated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

This list is not exhaustive and there may be a need to raise other health and safety issues with your safety rep, organiser or RHSO.

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www.gmb.org.uk

GMB feels, in line with the World Health Organisation and the TUC, that a suitable maximum would be 25°C (75°F).



HOW DO I JOIN? JOIN ONLINE AT WWW.GMB.ORG.UK

Or just fill in parts 1, 2 and 3 or 4 below and hand the form to your local GMB representative or post it to GMB, FREEPOST (WC2268), London SW19 4YY (you do not need a stamp). If you have any questions call GMB on 020 8947 3131, email info@gmb.org.uk or visit our website www.gmb.org.uk

FOR UNION USE ONLY Section Branch No Membership No Date of joining

GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

Surname First name Title Mrs/Ms/Mr Date of birth
 Home address Home Tel Email
 Postcode Mobile I agree to abide by GMB rules Signature
 We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members
 Bangladeshi / Black African / Black Caribbean / Black British
 Chinese / Indian / Irish / Pakistani / White
 Other:

2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

Employer Your job Pay No
 Address where you work
 Postcode How many hours a week do you work? Work Tel Pay Date

3 CHOOSE EITHER AUTHORISATION OF DEDUCTION OF YOUR TRADE UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUR PAY

Section 68, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act 1992 as amended
 • I authorise my employer to deduct from my pay each week/month the sum of £ or other amounts as may be fixed by the GMB from time to time.
 • Please start the deductions immediately and pay the amounts to the GMB.
 • I note that this agreement may be cancelled by one month's notice in writing.
 • I give permission to my employer to notify the GMB of any future change of address.
 Signed Cash
 Date

4 OR INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Please fill in the form and send to GMB, 22–24 Worples Road, London SW19 4DD
 Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch
 Originator's Identification Number

To the Manager of Bank/Building Society
 Address
 Postcode

For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.
 Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.
 Signature(s)
 Date

Names of account holder(s) Bank/Building Society Account Number Bank/Building Society Sort Code
 Reference number (Office use only)

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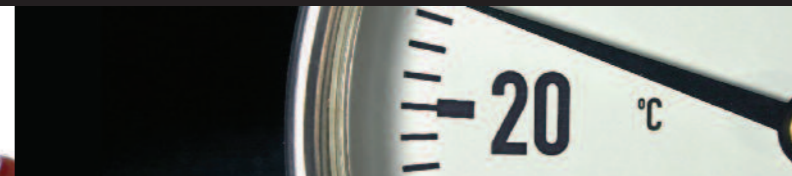
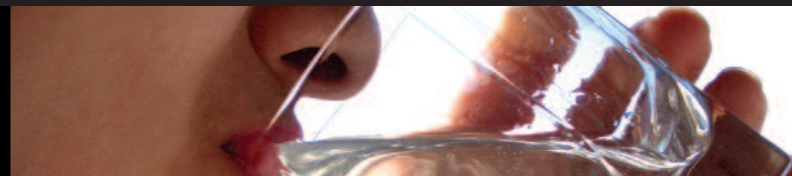
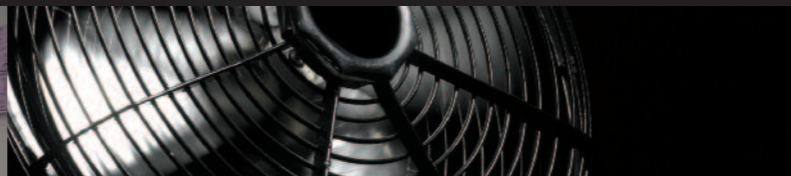
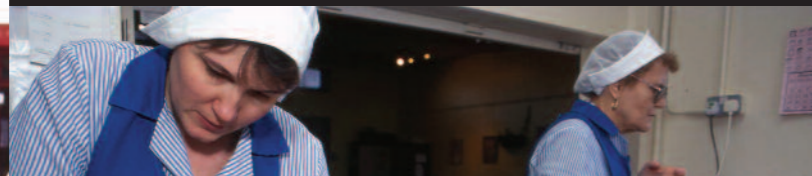
A guide for GMB safety representatives

Feeling the Heat

Hot work, either outdoors or indoors, can certainly lead to an increase in accidents and injuries. Some, unenlightened employers, see this as just a seasonal irritation...



...over which they have no control and so have little or no inclination to do anything about looking into control measures. GMB however believes that all workers have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. This guidance should help GMB members wherever they may work.



If you are not yet a member of GMB JOIN TODAY

INTRODUCTION

Whatever the arguments around global warming there is little doubt that summers seem to be getting hotter and more intense. As temperatures rise workers in all industries suffer. Working in excessive heat is not only uncomfortable but can be dangerous and in extreme cases fatal. Hot work, either outdoors or indoors, can certainly lead to an increase in accidents and injuries. Some, unenlightened employers, see this as just a seasonal irritation over which they have no control and so have little or no inclination to do anything about looking into control measures. GMB however believes that all workers have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. This guidance should help GMB members wherever they may work.

THE PROBLEM OUTDOORS

GMB members who work outdoors face some very clear dangers from hot work and exposure to sunlight. There is an increased risk from sunstroke, sunburn and heat exhaustion particularly when work is physically strenuous. The effects of high temperatures are made worse by other environmental factors. Heat stress is more likely to occur if the air is humid, the air is still, there is direct heat radiation and the exposure is for long periods. Some of the effects are:

SKIN CANCER—This is now one of the most common cancers in the UK with incidents still rising. It has been estimated that 80% of cases could be avoided. On average outdoor workers receive 3 to 4 times more Ultra Violet (UV) Radiation exposure than those that work indoors. This cumulative exposure puts outdoor workers at much greater risk of contracting skin cancer.

HEAT STRESS—Too much heat increases fatigue and can cause extra strain on the heart and lungs. The physical symptoms to look for include:

- Inability to concentrate

Whatever the arguments around global warming there is little doubt that summers seem to be getting hotter and more intense

- Clammy skin
- Rapid pulse
- Muscle cramps, nausea and vomiting
- Heat rash —“Prickly heat”
- Headaches and blurred vision
- Dizziness and fainting
- Fatigue and light headedness

A late symptom of heat stress can often be severe thirst. Heat stress can in turn lead to heat stroke.

HEAT STROKE—This is much more serious than heat stress and symptoms can include:

- Hot dry skin, as sweating stops
- Confusion
- Convulsions
- Loss of consciousness

Obviously the latter is extremely serious and could result in death. This condition requires immediate medical treatment. It will take at least 30 minutes to cool the body once it has overheated.

OTHER PROBLEMS—Prolonged exposure to the sun can also lead to skin ageing more rapidly. In the long term eyesight problems are also associated with radiation exposure and glare.

WHAT THE EMPLOYER SHOULD DO

As the employer has a clear legal duty to provide you with a safe and healthy workplace there is a need to carry out a risk assessment to determine the extent of the problem which might affect you. From this risk assessment action should be taken to reduce the extent of the problem. Some areas that should be considered are:

- Any clothing supplied, should be loose fitting and of a close woven fabric
- The supply of hats and neck protection should be considered
- The supply of sunscreen, which should be high protection (15 plus)
- Encourage the taking of frequent breaks
- Supply free cold drinks

If possible arrange the working day so that at the time of greatest heat, generally between 11am and 3pm, there is an opportunity to work in the shade.

THE PROBLEM INDOORS

Rising temperatures increases the likelihood of fatigue which in turn leads to an increase in accidents. As the temperature goes up people sweat without moving, stress levels rise, concentration levels fall, mistakes increase, productivity goes down and accident levels rise. In addition if you are doing manual work there is a greater loss of fluids leading to dehydration and potential heat stress as the core body temperature rises.

All of these problems become worse if the humidity is also high. When the body is unable to cool itself through sweating as the air is already loaded with moisture serious heat illnesses can occur much faster.

A MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE?

Surprisingly there is no legal maximum temperature for working indoors. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 state that temperatures within workplaces must

be reasonable. To say that this phrase is open to interpretation by many employers would be an understatement. GMB feels, in line with the World Health Organisation and the TUC, that a suitable maximum would be 25°C (75°F).

The Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers recommend that a suitable range of indoor temperatures should be between 13°C and 23°C depending on how strenuous the work involved may be. Some examples include:

- Heavy work in factories 13°C
- Light work in factories 16°C
- Hospital wards and shops 18°C
- Offices and dining rooms 20°C.

In addition thermometers should be available at convenient distances from every part of the workplace to enable temperatures to be measured.

WHAT THE EMPLOYER SHOULD DO

To enable your workplace to have a reasonable temperature your employer should take the following measures:

- Provide good ventilation, which should consist of a flow of fresh or purified air. Open windows can sometimes supply this but there may be a need for this to be provided by mechanical means. This can be achieved by providing air cooling plant or air conditioning units. **If temporary cooling units are used these should be replaced on a permanent basis to avoid annual disagreements over their supply.**
- Windows can be shaded to deflect direct heat and glare and is a relatively cheap method to use.
- Insulation of buildings should be considered, which helps keep heat out in summer and heat in during winter.
- The provision of free cold drinks and the ability to take extra breaks, preferably in cooler areas.
- The relaxation of any formal dress codes or the insistence on the wearing of heavy uniforms.

THE ROLE OF THE GMB SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

GMB safety representatives should use their rights (under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations) to get involved with any risk assessments to make sure their experience and practical knowledge is incorporated in the introduction of any safety measures designed to reduce exposure to sunlight or heat.

They should monitor indoor temperatures and discuss rising temperatures with the employer.

Ensure the employer plans for summer temperatures **before** it becomes a problem, and this should be done through the safety committee.

Raise any complaints about the temperature or heat with the employer on behalf of the members.

Report any ill health effects from heat excess in the accident book.

Where management refuse to take any measures to reduce heat or alleviate the symptoms of excessive temperatures take collective grievances on behalf of the workforce and involve GMB Officers.

PROTECTION OF WORKERS

There are a number of measures to be adopted irrespective of whether the work is done inside or outside. These include the following:

- Train the workforce to learn the signs of heat induced illness
- Perform the heaviest tasks in the coolest part of the day
- Slowly build up tolerance to the heat and work activity (this normally takes up to two weeks)
- If possible reduce lone working and work in pairs
- Drink plenty of cold drinks that are not caffeine or alcohol based.