TFG Brands London

Extreme Heat Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

We recognise the fundamental Human Right to a safe and healthy working environment, which includes comfortable temperature in the workplace. Due to climate change, consistently high temperatures are becoming a greater concern in some regions, and the ability to keep the workplace at comfortable temperature has become more difficult.

These higher temperatures can increase the risk of workplace accidents due to issues, such as sweaty palms, fogged up safety glasses, dehydration and dizziness. Working in high temperatures can have a significant impact on workers' short-term and long-term health and consequently impacts factory productivity. Some common heat-related illnesses are heat-stress, heat-stroke and heat-exhaustion, which can be life-threatening and need immediate treatment.

There are multiple factors that can raise the ambient temperature for the worker or at the workplace. These can include, outdoor temperature, humidity, air flow, radiant heat sources, heavy work-clothing and PPE, and physically demanding labour. This guideline outlines measures that can be implemented in the workplace to accommodate for periods of extreme temperatures. The scope of this guidance is workplace and places associated with the workplace, such as dormitories and daycare facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For countries, where these recommendations are legal requirements, they must be followed. For recommendations that are not legal requirements, they should nonetheless be considered as guidance and applied when and where relevant.

- Factory should regularly **monitor** the temperature of all workplace areas and conduct regular **risk assessments** to identify:

    a. Which workplace areas expose workers to high heat.

    b. Whether current measures effectively cool down workplaces to an acceptable temperature.

    c. Whether all outdoor and indoor appliances and equipment are at risk of catching fire or explosion due to heat-exposure and could potentially harm workers.

    d. Other areas of risk related to extreme temperature.

- Be in continuous **dialogue with workers and worker representatives** to understand what temperature is comfortable for workers and what their temperature related needs are.

- Appropriate **worker committees** should have the outcome of these dialogues on their agenda during their regular meetings.
- Ensure workers have access to **effective grievance mechanisms** to raise concerns on heat-related issues.
- **Train** supervisors and workers on the following, and consider seeking assistance from trained medical practitioners on:

    a. How to recognize signs of heat-related illness and what to do.

    b. How workers can reduce risk of heat-related illness themselves.

    c. Provide information posters in common areas, sharing the above information.

- Ensure workers stay **hydrated**.

    a. Provide multiple water stations for workers with safe and adequate water at a relevant temperature, as per relevant health organisation recommendations. Where local recommendations are not available, suppliers are advised to follow the World Health Organization's recommendations.

    b. Encourage workers to stay hydrated, i.e., by drinking 1 cup of water every 15-20 minutes or hydrate well every hour, even if the worker is not thirsty.

    c. In periods of extreme temperatures, employers should provide water with low salt-concentration, diluted flavoured drinks or electrolytes, to ensure workers are properly hydrated.

- Provide proper **storage facilities for workers that choose to bring food** from home into the workplace.
- Ensure workers receive regular and adequate **health checks**.
- For vulnerable workers, such as pregnant women, elderly people, workers regular exposed to heat, etc., health checks should be more frequent during periods of peak temperature.
- If there are children in daycare facility, they should also have regular health checks during periods of high temperature.
- **Reduce direct sunlight exposure for both indoor and outdoor workers**, particularly during peak temperature hours. For outdoor workers consider:
    - Providing portable shade structures like canopies or umbrellas.
    - Rotating work schedules to minimise sun exposure during peak hours.
    - Implementing rest breaks in cooler shaded areas.
- Provide proper **ventilation, circulation of air** or **air cooler** in workplaces.

a. Ensure cooling appliances are cleaned regularly and well maintained for optimal usage. For water coolers, ensure the water is changed regularly.

b. Note: Fans are effective tools for cooling workers if the temperature is below 35 degrees Celsius. If the temperature is above 35 degrees Celsius, however, this will heat the workers up.

- Allow and provide regular **breaks** during periods of high temperature.
    a. Consider implementing rotation schedules for workers where it is difficult to reduce the exposure to heat.
- **Reduce heat emitted from machines** where possible.
- Provide **PPE for extreme temperature**, e.g. water-cooled garments, air-cooled garments, ice-packets vests, wetted overgarments, and heat-reflective aprons or suits.
    a. Avoid unnecessary PPE.

In case of **heat-related illness**, workers must be given necessary medical care. If needed, the worker should be taken immediately to an onsite or off-site **hospital or health centre**. In countries where necessary, arrangements should be made with local hospital and ambulance facilities.

During periods of extreme heat that can cause disruption to production, keep a **close dialogue** with your **local sourcing office** for support.