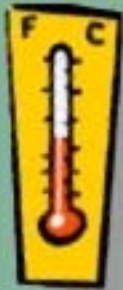


SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY



WORKING TEMPERATURES

Too hot or too cold at work?

All UK employers must ensure that measures are in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of anyone present on the work premises.

This information sheet is intended to give practical advice to employers and employees on what to do if they receive or wish to make a complaint about temperature in their workplace. It is intended for those in retail, warehousing or other similar types of working environment.

The information given is for **GENERAL GUIDANCE ONLY** and is not a legal interpretation of Health and Safety law.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Too Cold:

Employers must by law make sure that there is a reasonable temperature in workrooms where people work for longer than short periods. The temperature in most workrooms should normally be at least 16°C (60.8°F) during working hours. If it is impractical to maintain that temperature (for example where rooms have doors open to the outside or where food products have to be kept cool), a lower temperature is allowable. Where the work involves severe physical effort a lower temperature of 13°C (55.4°F) is permissible.

If exposure to low temperatures cannot be reasonably avoided, facilities should be available to enable workers to warm themselves. Suitable protective clothing should also be provided.

Too Hot:

There is no maximum temperature specified by law. However, employers are required to take reasonable steps to prevent discomfort to employees. Steps could include providing adequate ventilation, shading windows and placing workstations away from radiant heat.

More advice overleaf →

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you think that the temperature of your workroom is too cold or too hot you should measure it using the thermometer which should be provided at your workplace. In cold weather, if the temperature is below 16°C after the first hour of work, there may be grounds for a complaint. In the first instance employees should raise it with their supervisor or manager, asking them to take measures to improve conditions. Employees may wish to do this together with other colleagues or through a trade union representative. Employers should be given reasonable time to rectify the situation, particularly in the case of heating or ventilation system breakdown that may only cause a short-term problem.



If the employer does not resolve the problem after a reasonable period, employees may contact the Health and Safety Section of Leeds Neighbourhoods and Housing Department on (0113) 247 6284. The Health and Safety team can provide further advice and, in appropriate cases, take up the complaint on behalf of the complainant. All enquiries are treated in the strictest confidence.

Complainants should have the following information ready when contacting the Section:

- The name of the employer
- The exact address of the employer
- The type of business
- The temperature recorded in the workroom and how long it has remained as such
- Details of any action undertaken by the complainant to resolve the problem
- Whether or not the employer can be informed that a complaint has been made.

Written complaints may also be sent to:

Neighbourhoods and Housing Department
Environmental Health Services
Health and Safety
Millshaw Park Way
Churwell
Leeds
LS11 0LS

For further advice on working temperatures or any other aspect of health and safety, you can contact the Health and Safety section of Environmental Health Services on (0113) 24-77791 or env.health@leeds.gov.uk
