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Working in cold weather

What are your rights when it comes to working in extreme weather conditions like frost and snow?

From getting to work, to dealing with a cold office or working outdoors in sub-zero temperatures, the law can sometimes be confusing. But there are certain steps that your employer must take to ensure that you're safe while in work.

Getting to work in extreme weather

It is usually the employee's responsibility to get to work, however sometimes the weather may put this beyond your control. It may be unsafe to travel in extreme weather conditions, or your childcare may be affected.

Ask your employer if it's possible to work from home if it's unsafe to travel. What may be considered safe for most people may not be safe for a disabled or older worker and employers should take your personal circumstances into account.

You may be able to use annual or special leave if you can't make it to work or work from home but this will depend on your organisation's policies.

Temperature in the workplace

Your employer is legally required to provide a reasonable temperature in the workplace. The HSE Code of Practice says this should be 16°C in indoor workplaces, or 13°C where more physical work is required.

It is up to employers to assess risks to staff and to put in place any mitigations. Consideration must also be given to how it may affect disabled people.

Working outdoors

Employers should also conduct a risk assessment if you're required to work outdoors during extreme weather, including if you're required to drive as part of your job. You should be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) required to do your work safely.

Speaking to PCS

If you are worried about any element of your work during extreme weather you can contact your local PCS Rep. [Log in to PCS Digital](#) and then click on My Details > My Branch Committee to find your local rep's contact information. You can also read our article on PCS Digital about your rights on [working in cold temperatures](#).