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# Keep cool and safe this week

With hot weather forecast for much of the UK all this week, read our guide to your rights and how to stay cool.

Feeling hot can be a real distraction when trying to work. And it can be dangerous if left unaddressed, with the real risks of heat stress, exhaustion and dehydration. Here are some tips on keeping cool. But first of all, here's what your employer can do to make sure you're comfortable and safe.

## In the office

Although there is no legal maximum working temperature, employers have a duty to make sure that the temperature is reasonable. 'Reasonable' will be dependent on the context: for example, the kind of work you do, the uniform or equipment you use, the place of work itself. It is essential that this is established as part of a thorough health and safety risk assessment.

Health and safety reps should be asked to play a key role in this and in ongoing consultation. 'Reasonable' also varies according to personal circumstances – for example, according to a disability or medical condition.

Employers can offer simple solutions to ensure safety and comfort in hot conditions, such as plenty of easily available drinking water, opportunities to take more breaks to cool down, better ventilation to help keep cool, and even reducing the day's hours so as to avoid the hottest periods or extended periods in the heat.

## Working from home

Reasonable temperature applies to home-working too. Here it might be easier to make adjustments directly, especially as you might be more able to wear looser fitting clothes instead of a uniform, or to find cooler parts of your accommodation and maybe avoid direct sunlight in the heat of the day.

Other things you can do to keep cool might include avoiding caffeine and hot drinks, taking cool showers, putting cool water on your skin or clothes, or putting your feet in a basin of cool water. It can also help to keep the living space cool by

keeping windows closed during the day, and using an electric fan to circulate the air and stop it from heating up.

## **Help and resources**

Whether at home or in the workplace, any problems to do with temperature should be addressed to your health and safety rep. You can find their contact details on [PCS Digital](#).

There are also guides and advice specifically on hot temperatures in the workplace in [PCS Knowledge](#) and from the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) website](#).