

Cold weather working: Helping staff stay safe and warm

Employers are being reminded of their responsibilities to keep workers safe as cold weather continues to affect large parts of the country.

Great Britain's workplace regulator, the Health and Safety Executive, is stressing the importance of [protecting workers during the cold weather](#). It comes as the Met Office has issued a level three cold weather alert until Thursday December 15 for large areas of the UK.

John Rowe, Head of Operational Strategy, said: "We're calling on all employers to take a sensible approach during the cold weather we are experiencing. There are lots of jobs that will be more difficult in the current conditions. Most employers will recognise this and make appropriate accommodations for their staff. That is the right thing to do.

"It's also important employers ensure staff are working in a reasonable temperature. People working in uncomfortably cold environments are less likely to perform well and more likely to behave unsafely because their ability to make good decisions deteriorates."

Temperatures in indoor workplaces are covered by the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, which place a legal obligation on employers to provide a "reasonable" temperature in the workplace.

All employers are expected to ensure indoor workplaces are kept at a reasonable temperature. [The Approved Code of Practice](#) suggests the minimum temperature should normally be at least 16 degrees Celsius. If the work involves rigorous physical effort, the temperature should be at least 13 degrees Celsius.

John Rowe said: "Complying with the code of practice is the right thing for an employer to do. By maintaining a reasonable temperature, employers are likely to maintain the morale and productivity of their staff as well as improving health and safety."

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