

Workplace Temperature Guidelines

1. Introduction

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde places great importance on the well-being of its primary asset, its staff, and is constantly striving to ensure that working conditions are reasonable and acceptable. This document lays out guidelines on working temperatures. In particular, it defines an acceptable range of temperatures, and lays down procedures to be followed when temperatures fall outside this range.

2. Statutory requirements

Under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, an employer is required to provide a safe and healthy working environment, so far as is reasonably practicable. The requirements for temperature in indoor workplaces are contained in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, which came into force on 1 January, 1996. These regulations require only that “during working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable”.

Until 1 January 1996, there was a statutory minimum temperature of 16°C, which had to be obtained within one hour of commencing work. This limit is now included in the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, rather than in the Regulations themselves. The ACOP does not define a maximum temperature limit.

Many organisations including the ILO and TUC have recommended limits on temperature.

3. Temperature limits

The acceptable temperatures, in most circumstances, recommended by the NHSGG&C Health and Safety Service are;

Minimum temperature - 16°C (62F) within one hour of starting work. Maximum temperature - 25°C (80F)

The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers have recommended limits of 19 -24°C. This is the range that most people would find comfortable.

Exceptions to these temperatures would be areas where the work involves severe physical effort, where it should be at least 13°C or areas which are open to the outside. The upper limit may also be exceeded in areas where the work processes involved create an environment where heat is inevitable e.g. kitchens, boiler rooms or IT server rooms.

Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) in warm/hot environments increases the risk of heat stress. This occurs when the body is unable to cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature. Heat stress can cause heat exhaustion and lead to heat stroke if the person is unable to cool down.

4. Implementation

The implementation of the guidance will require the provision of thermometers to monitor workplace temperature, and this is a requirement of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (Regulation 7(3)).

Departmental Managers will be responsible for:

- a) Ensuring an adequate supply of thermometers. These should be alcohol and not mercury.
- b) Ensuring that all staff are familiar with the location of the thermometers. When locating the thermometer avoid window frames and ledges, above radiators or next to doors.
- c) Requesting the involvement of Estates or Hard Facilities Management Company to help resolve temperature issues. e.g. monitoring of temperatures over several days

The implementation of the policy will be the responsibility of the Departmental Manager. This document seeks to address temperature related problems by dividing the guidelines into two categories; - short and long term procedures.

Assess the risk of overheating in your workplace and consider appropriate control measures to implement. Be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat stress and dehydration (thirst, dry mouth, dark or strong-smelling urine, urinating infrequently or in small amounts, inability to concentrate, muscle cramps, fainting). Don't wait until you start to feel unwell before you take a break.

Use a buddy system with your team to look out for the signs of heat stress (e.g. confusion, looking pale or clammy, fast breathing) in each other.

5. Short term procedures

It is accepted that during the summer and winter months or during breakdown of services, there may be periods of time when it is not practicable/possible to maintain the working temperatures within the recommended guidelines. During these times it will be the Departmental Managers responsibility to seek locally agreed solutions to alleviate the discomfort of staff.

These may include:

| Temperature above 25°C | Temperature below 16°C |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary removal to another area.• Portable fans.*• Industrial cooling fans for larger areas.*• Temperature breaks.• Provision of cold drinks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary removal to another area.• Localised heating.*• Temperature breaks.• Hot drink facility. |

* Estates must be contacted if any of these solutions are being proposed. Also, Infection Control may need to be consulted with regard to the use of fans in clinical areas.

6. Long term procedures

Problems which exist over the 'long term' are generally accepted to be over a period of months and not just periodic hot spells over the summer months.

Long term procedures or solutions are most probably required due to problems with heating/cooling/ventilation systems. The risk to the health and safety of staff increases when temperatures are excessive for long periods of time. If a potential problem has been identified temperature recordings must be taken for 3 to 5 consecutive days at the same time each day. If the readings are consistently on or below 16°C or above 25°C it is important that a full risk assessment is carried out to establish the extent of the risk to the health and safety of staff. Health and Safety staff can assist with aspects of the risk assessment process.

If it is clearly demonstrated that there is a significant problem with the temperature in a particular area then appropriate action must be taken by the Departmental Manager, the estates department and or Hard Facilities Management Company must be contacted to assess and establish if the current heating and / or ventilation system is operating within design parameters, depending on the outcome of the assessment any further actions identified may require a continued multi service approach (including the Estates department and or Hard Facilities Management Company) to bring the matter to a safe conclusion.

Where there is an identified need NHSGGC Occupational Hygienist can be contacted to provide advice and or guidance relating to monitoring, for non-urgent matters the [Request Form for Occupational Hygiene Support](#) should be completed; for any urgent matters telephone contact is advised

It would be appropriate to instigate short-term solutions (see Para 5) until the situation is resolved.

7. General

In the interests of managing the guidelines and as a measure of aiding risk assessment there should be consistent monitoring of workplace temperatures.

Temperature logs should be kept for each area where staff are working in temperatures at or around 16 degrees and above 25 degrees, for prolonged periods of time. The temperature should be noted in each area once per week on the same day and time. See Appendix 1 for suggested pro forma

A note of any temperature related problems should also be kept.

8. Outside working

For staff who are required to work outside for all or part of their working time, issues related to the provision of warm clothing would be covered by the Boards PPE Policy.

9. Shared space

Individuals have different thresholds of what they consider comfortable conditions. Staff working in areas which are shared workspaces are encouraged to work collaboratively with their co-workers in achieving a mutually acceptable working environment for all concerned, within the limits set out within this guidance.

Health & Safety Services



Appendix 1 - Temperature recording form (5 Days)

Location (Site / Department / Room): _____

| Date Time | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 Hour After Occupation: _____ | | | | | |
| Middle of Shift: _____ | | | | | |
| End of Shift _____ | | | | | |

Please note: all temperature reading should be in Celsius.

| Date Time | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 Hour After Occupation: _____ | | | | | |
| Middle of Shift: _____ | | | | | |
| End of Shift _____ | | | | | |