

Extreme heat – workplace health & safety info & advice

The Met Office has issued an extreme heat amber warning covering much of Scotland. The warning is in force today, Monday 18 July, and tomorrow, Tuesday 19 July. It comes as a UK emergency was declared, with the first red extreme heat warning in place in England. Details for the amber and red alerts in the UK are on the Met Office website [here](#).

The Scottish Government's resilience arrangements have been activated. The warning in Scotland has been extended and now covers all of Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife, Perth, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and eastern parts of Lanarkshire, as well as the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. Justice Secretary Keith Brown, Minister for Resilience, [urged the public](#) to monitor forecasts and follow public health advice.

Employers have specific responsibilities for the health and safety of their workers. Risk assessments should be carried out, with measures put in place to reduce harm to their employees and these should be reviewed if something changes, such as risk of extreme temperatures. If necessary, further steps should be taken to reduce possible harm. The Scottish Government and the STUC agreed a [Fair Work Charter for Severe Weather](#) which recommends all employers have in place a severe weather policy.

UNISON has issued [extreme heat advice](#) to members, covering a range of key factors, including risks such as heat exhaustion, dehydration and UV rays; what employers should be doing; risk assessments/working from home / reviewing the type of work carried out / workplace ventilation and thermal comfort / UNISON and the TUC's maximum temperature call and World Health Organisation recommendations. It also covers PPE, outdoor workers and impact on pregnant workers and those with existing health conditions. Similar advice and information is on this TUC [warning](#) and [press release](#) and on this [briefing](#), which covers the right to refuse to work, on union advice, when in danger.

Health and safety reps and others may find the following links of use in addition to others on this briefing: [Overheating Position Statement | CIBSE](#), [Temperature \(hse.gov.uk\)](#), [Is it too hot to work? Temperature in the workplace - HSE news](#), [Hottest day: How to keep cool at work during the heatwave \(shponline.co.uk\)](#)

This information is for the immediate situation of course, but climate change means we face increasing numbers of extreme weather events, as the news headlines report almost daily here and around the world. Practical support for branches, health and safety and green/environment reps is available in new resources launched last week, covering [Climate Hazards & Resilience in the Workplace](#).

Useful links

- [BBC Scotland report today](#)
- [UNISON extreme heat advice to members](#)
- [UNISON quick guide to temp at work](#)
- [TUC interactive guide 'too hot, too cold'](#)
- [UNISON Scotland health and safety](#)
- [Fair Work Charter for Severe Weather](#)
- [Climate Hazards & Resilience in the Workplace](#)
- [UNISON Scotland website](#)