

Workplace Temperature - Health and Safety Information

The following guidance summarises relevant health and safety legislation in relation to the minimum temperature in indoor workplaces.

Legislation

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 specify the requirements for most aspects of the working environment. Regulation 7 deals specifically with the temperature in indoor workplaces and states that:

'During working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable.'

The associated Approved Code of Practice [ACOP] goes on to explain:

'The temperature in workrooms should provide reasonable comfort without the need for special clothing. 'Workroom' means a room where people normally work for more than short periods. The temperature in workrooms should normally be at least 16 degrees Celsius unless much of the work involves severe physical effort in which case the temperature should be at least 13 degrees Celsius. These temperatures may not, however, ensure reasonable comfort, depending on other factors such as air movement and relative humidity.'

'Where a reasonable temperature cannot be achieved in a work room local heating or cooling should be provided. Where, despite such provision, workers are exposed to temperatures that do not give reasonable comfort, suitable protective clothing and rest facilities should be provided. Where practical systems of work [e.g. task rotation] should be implemented to ensure the length of time people have to work in the cold is limited.'

University Arrangements

It is recognised that for sedentary activities 16C is unlikely to provide sufficient thermal comfort, hence the University endeavours to provide internal comfort conditions for staff and students of at least 19C during the winter - see [Estate Office Website](#).

Where reasonable temperatures are not being achieved this should be reported to the Estates Helpdesk (email: estates-helpdesk@nottingham.ac.uk) who will arrange for a review to be carried out and, if necessary, supply secondary heaters until a permanent solution is implemented. It is important that this is sanctioned by Estates Engineers so that localised heating system deficiencies can be monitored and corrected over time. This will also ensure that any secondary heaters provided are:

- The most suitable type to ensure efficiency,
- Do not introduce other hazards into the area,
- That they are correctly sited, and
- That they have undergone electrical testing.

The continued use of secondary heaters can compromise the efficiency of the building heating system by locally raising temperatures so that the sensor controls shut down or reduce the required heat flow through the building to the detriment of other areas.

Other short term measures that can also be considered pending a return of more favourable weather conditions, or rectification of the underlying heating problem, include:

- Wearing appropriate clothing,
- Possibility of staff working in a warmer location until the situation is resolved.

Further information

The HSE has a range of useful reference material on its [website](#).

Information from the Estate Office is that secondary heaters are also a factor of 3-4 times less efficient than the installed building heating systems thereby adding to electricity costs and carbon emissions.