



Cardiff
Metropolitan
University

Prifysgol
Metropolitan
Caerdydd

Environment and Estates

Temperature in the Workplace

Established: 2005

Reviewed: September 2020

Version Number: 3

PROTOCOL ON TEMPERATURE IN THE WORKPLACE

Health and Safety Legislation

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues such as heating, lighting, workstations, seating and welfare facilities.

Whilst, the Workplace Regulations do not specify a minimum or maximum indoor workplace temperature, the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) does recommend the following:

“The temperatures 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 refer to readings taken using an ordinary dry bulb thermometer, close to workstations, at working height and away from windows.”

However, the ACOP adds that this “...does not apply to rooms or parts of rooms where it would be impractical to maintain those temperatures, for example in rooms which have to be kept open to the outside, or where food or other products have to be kept cold.”

HSE publication, Thermal Comfort in the Workplace, notes that “thermal comfort is difficult to define” and that “the best that you can realistically hope to achieve is a thermal environment which satisfies the majority of people in the workplace”.

Cardiff Metropolitan University’s Commitment

Cardiff Metropolitan University is committed to meeting its’ legal obligation and additionally to seek to provide a thermal environment that satisfies the majority of people in the workplace, the majority of the time.

Cardiff Metropolitan University is also committed to the responsible use of energy and supporting the Welsh Government in its legal duty to promote sustainable development in Wales.

Temperature Guidance

Heating

To balance the requirements for thermal comfort and the responsible use of energy, Cardiff Metropolitan University seeks to heat its' buildings according to needs to levels based on guidance published by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE).

- Offices, lecture theatres, teaching spaces: 21°C
- Student residences: 21°C

Other areas may be heated to a lower level, e.g. sports halls and gymnasias.

It should be noted during particularly cold spells and following periods when the building has been unoccupied, that it may not be possible to achieve these temperatures by the start of the working day. In such circumstances Cardiff Metropolitan University is committed to taking all reasonable steps to maintain at least the legal minimum temperature until "normal" levels are reached.

Thermal Comfort Queries

In the event of a breakdown or malfunction of a heating or cooling system the fault should be reported following the normal procedure, i.e. raising a works request through the local campus reception or Residences office.

Where there is an issue with thermal comfort that does not involve a breakdown or malfunction, in the first instance thermometers should be obtained from the relevant campus services reception to ascertain the temperature in the work area. Should temperatures not meet Cardiff Metropolitan University's target levels a works request should be raised for Estates to investigate the cause of the problem.

In the event that temperatures are within Cardiff Metropolitan University target levels and a query with thermal comfort levels still exist then this should be referred to the line manager who will report on to the relevant section head. They will then need to jointly consider issues such as the type of work being carried out, the age, sex, state of health and degree of fitness of the individual and whether appropriate clothing is being worn.

Electric heaters

Electric heating is expensive, environmentally damaging due to high CO2 emissions, and can pose a significant fire risk.

However, in the event of failure of the centralised heating system for prolonged periods of time resulting in uncomfortable temperatures, temporary electric heaters may be provided by Estates and Facilities. In this event, supplied heaters will be:

- Portable Appliance Tested (PAT)
- Thermostatically controlled
- Correctly sited to avoid hazards

Recipients of portable heaters must ensure that they are:

- Operated safely to prevent overloading of electrical circuits

- Switched off in unoccupied rooms for safety reasons
- Not left on out of hours under any circumstances

Individuals are not permitted to bring in/purchase their own local heaters and, if found, these will be removed during routine health and safety inspections.

The continued use of portable heaters can adversely affect BMS controls of centralised heating systems. As thermostats detect high temperatures caused by the heaters, heating to potentially large areas may be shut down or reduced throughout the building to the detriment of many other occupants leading to complaints.

The use of portable electric or gas fired heaters in Cardiff Metropolitan University is therefore not permitted except in exceptional circumstances, or as authorised by the Director of Environment and Estates for short term use only, in limited critical areas, in the event of a sudden temporary fault with the main system.

Comfort Cooling and Air Conditioning

The vast majority of spaces will not be temperature controlled during the peak summer period and occupants are requested to make their best endeavours to cope at times of peak outside temperatures.

Whilst as previously stated there is no legal maximum temperature in the workplace, Cardiff Metropolitan University recognises guidance published by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) and notes that indoor temperatures in excess of 28°C for prolonged periods may prove uncomfortable.

Therefore, in some areas (kitchens, kilns, specific academic areas eg. Health Sciences, IT suites), where there is no other practicable means of reducing heat gains, air conditioning will be considered as part of the risk assessment process (In this context “practicable” will include natural ventilation, local ventilation and shading).

Where comfort cooling is provided it will be controlled centrally by the Estates team in the same way as the centralised heating systems. If this is not technically feasible then departments will need to ensure that cooling equipment is not used irresponsibly.

All requests for comfort cooling/air conditioning should be made through the relevant section head to the Director of Environment and Estates. The Director of Environment and Estates will consider the use of such equipment only after thorough investigation and only where no other means of reducing temperatures can be employed.

Simple Ways You Can Ensure Thermal Comfort:

In extreme hot weather:

- Dress appropriately
- Consume cold drinks, water is preferable to carbonated drinks
- Use window shading, e.g. vertical blinds, curtains etc.
- Use openable windows to increase air movement
- Where openable windows do not exist or are limited use desk or pedestal fans to increase air movement
- Site workstations away from direct sunlight or other sources of unwanted heat
- Arrange with line manager to take regular breaks to cool down
- Make use of flexible work systems where possible to reduce exposure to periods of peak temperature

In extreme cold weather:

- Dress appropriately
- Keep windows and doors closed wherever possible and reduce other draughts
- Site workstations away from cold spots if possible such as windows
- Close blinds at the end of the day to retain heat in the space
- Avoid obstructing the heat flow of radiators with desks, cupboards and other furniture
- Ensure radiator thermostats are set to a comfortable setting at the end of each day to ensure the space heats up in the morning
- Arrange with line manager to take regular breaks to take hot drinks or to warm up.
- Stay as active as possible to maintain good circulation
- Make use of flexible work systems where possible to reduce exposure to coldest periods