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workplace regulations



health&safety
at work

This leaflet provides essential information on the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

The Regulations

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations provide for the implementation of the European Framework Directive for workplace health and safety.

The Regulations place an overriding duty on employers to make workplaces suitable for the individuals who work in them.

They must pay particular attention to the needs of disabled, pregnant and other vulnerable groups of workers. Employers must also consult workers' representatives on health and safety matters.

The Regulations require that:

- (i) all equipment, devices and systems must be maintained in an efficient state;
- (ii) workplaces must be provided with a sufficient quantity of fresh air and be free from draughts. Mechanical ventilation systems must be regularly cleaned to avoid contamination;
- (iii) reasonable working temperatures must be maintained throughout the working day. Although the law does not specify minimum temperatures, the minimum temperature in classrooms should be 16°C and 13°C in areas involving rigorous physical effort (see the NASUWT Health and Safety at Work leaflet, *Heating and Ventilation*). Employers must also avoid excessive temperatures.

There are currently no regulations on maximum temperatures but sustained temperatures above 27°C should be considered unacceptable. The World Health Organization recommends 24°C as a maximum temperature for comfortable working. Employers must provide sufficient thermometers

so that temperatures can be monitored by the workforce. The NASUWT is committed to campaigning to establish defined maximum temperatures;

- (iv) the workplace must be adequately lit by natural light, except in special circumstances;
- (v) all workplaces and the furniture and fittings they contain must be kept sufficiently clean and waste materials must not be allowed to accumulate;
- (vi) there must be sufficient space in which to work with comfort. Each employee in a workroom should have no less than 11 cubic metres of space (not counting space more than 4.2 metres above the floor) as the absolute minimum.

Account has to be taken of the furniture, fittings and the nature of the activity being undertaken. However, the Workplace Regulations Approved Code of Practice asserts that this Regulation does **not** apply to lecture halls and classrooms;

- (vii) all floors are in good condition, clean and dry. Traffic routes must be free from obstruction and of anything that might cause a person to slip, trip or fall;
- (viii) workers and others must be protected, both from the danger of falling from a height themselves and from the danger of being hit by objects falling from a height;
- (ix) all windows must be safe and, where necessary for reasons of safety, be made of safety glass. They must be capable of being cleaned in safety. They must not open in a way that poses danger to a passer-by;
- (x) pedestrians must be protected from vehicles on a mixed traffic route. Pedestrian routes and vehicle routes should be separate, if possible;
- (xi) powered doors must be safe. Swing doors must be fitted with a glass panel so that a person in a wheelchair can be seen from the other side;

- (xii) all workplaces must be provided with sufficient toilet and washing facilities. In schools where the use of toilet facilities may be concentrated into short periods (and where facilities may be shared with visiting members of the public), the aim should be to double the minimum provision.

No of people at work	No of wcs	No of wash stations
1 to 5	1	1
6 to 25	2	2
26 to 50	3	3
51 to 75	4	4
76 to 100	5	5

Showers must be provided for workers whose job is particularly dirty or strenuous;

- (xiii) wholesome drinking water and cups must be provided;
- (xiv) employers must provide suitable accommodation for the storage of outdoor clothing. A proper coat hook is the minimum provision but where special clothing has to be worn, a changing room and secure storage must be provided; and
- (xv) employers must provide rest rooms with adequate seating. Facilities that allow pregnant workers or nursing mothers to lie down must be provided. Suitable facilities for the consumption of food must be available.

Advice and support

For additional advice and support, contact your NASUWT Local Association or Scotland National Centre.

Contact details can be found:

- on the NASUWT website at www.nasuwat.org.uk;
- in the NASUWT diary or by phoning 0131 226 8480.