

# Workplace checklist to reduce climate change health and safety hazards

This checklist is designed to inform trade union health and safety representatives' inspections of their workplaces. It highlights hazards which directly result from or have become more likely because of human-caused global heating.<sup>1</sup> We cannot help safeguard our colleagues from issues we don't check for, so the TUC encourages all reps to add elements of this checklist to their inspections.

Not all of the checks will be relevant to all workplaces, but some of them will be. People working outdoors, such as in the construction, energy, emergency response, and public service industries, as well as workers in some warehouse and manufacturing jobs, are likely to be among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and this checklist is especially relevant for them and their health and safety reps.

As with all health and safety, we recommend regular reassessment of these hazards. Answering 'Yes' to most of the below checks will normally mean that the hazards are already being avoided or are already well mitigated. Answering 'No' will usually mean that your employer could do more to protect workers. Please use the notes section to record any existing mitigation or plans already in place.

## Policy and awareness

	Yes	No	Notes
Has your employer got a formal climate change risk policy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Does your employer's climate change risk policy make special provisions for...			
• Young people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Pregnant women?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Workers with existing health conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Disabled workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Has your employer got a formal climate change risk committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

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<sup>1</sup> This checklist is based primarily on a similar checklist produced by the American National Institute of Environmental Health Science, available at [https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/public/hasl\\_get\\_blob.cfm?ID=13563](https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/public/hasl_get_blob.cfm?ID=13563)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Has your employer got a formal decarbonisation/climate change plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Are workers generally well informed about their health and safety rights at work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Are workers well informed about climate change hazards related to...			
• Extreme/prolonged cold?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Extreme/prolonged heat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Fires (including wildfires)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Humidity and wet environments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Poor air quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Biological hazards from insect bites, plants, animals, biochemicals, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Does your employer work with the local community to address shared environmental risks and/or best practice mitigations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....

## **Workplace temperature**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Do workers have access to thermometers or thermostats in indoor work environments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Are indoor work locations <sup>2</sup> maintained at...			
• 13°C where heavy work is done?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• 16°C where light work is done?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• 18°C in hospital wards/shops/similar?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• 20°C in offices/dining rooms/similar?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Can breaks be taken away from hot areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Can workers control the temperature of their working environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Can workers control the temperature of different areas of the workplace separately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

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<sup>2</sup> These temperatures are those which the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers recommends for employers to demonstrate compliance with Regulation 7 (temperature in indoor workplaces) of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. See <https://www.cibse.org/knowledge-research/knowledge-portal/ctt8-cibse-top-tips-8-temperature-in-indoor-workplaces-thermal-comfort>

	Yes	No	Notes
Are all heaters and air conditioning units unobstructed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Are all heaters and air conditioning units working and serviced at least annually?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Are all windows and doors draught-proofed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Do all company vehicles have heating and air conditioning controls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Does your employer have in place...			
• A cold snap plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• A heat wave plan? <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• A temperature control failure plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Do workers have access to thermometers while in outdoor working environments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Is provision made for workers to dress appropriately for the temperature throughout the year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
On cold days, are workers able to wear appropriately warm clothing/uniform?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
On hot/bright days, are workers able to...			
• Wear appropriately cool/loose clothing or uniforms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Wear sunglasses or tinted goggles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Access UV-protection (sun cream)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Erect or access shades or canopies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Is provision made for work to move to shaded/air-conditioned/cooler areas on hot days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is provision made for outdoor work to be avoided or shifted to cooler times during the hottest parts of the day/year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Do workers have access to drinking water on hot days/in hot conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

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<sup>3</sup> See the Joint Union Heatwave Protocol of 2023 as an example. This is available at <https://neu.org.uk/latest/library/joint-union-heatwave-protocol>

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Can breaks be taken away from the heat on hot days/in hot conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Are there facilities for warming up and making hot drinks on cold days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Are workers well informed about identifying and avoiding heat stress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....

## Extreme weather

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Is there a lone worker policy in place that makes special arrangements for workers working in physical isolation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Do lone workers have contingency plans for if they become isolated by extreme weather?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Do lone workers contingency plans include access to...			
• Temperature protection PPE?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
• Food and water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
• Communications equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is provision made for visits/work to be postponed during period of flooding/wildfires affecting access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is provision made for workers to work from home/reschedule work during flooding/wildfires affecting their access to work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....

## Chemicals and illness

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Are workers well informed about the hazards of pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides they might use/encounter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is appropriate PPE available to protect workers from pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides they might use/encounter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....

	Yes	No	Notes
Are workers well informed about identifying illnesses resulting from contact with pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Are measures in place to prevent the outbreak of illness among workers? E.g. Are workers instructed to stay away from the office if coughing/sneezing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... ..... .....
Is there a viable sick pay system in place to enable workers to isolate when infectious?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

## Air quality

	Yes	No	Notes
Is air quality measured in all areas of each workplace, including offices, corridors, toilets, canteens, stores, workshops, and communal areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... ..... .....
Do air quality measuring devices monitor...			
• Carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Carbon monoxide (CO) levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Sulphur dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> ) levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Particulate matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> , PM <sub>10</sub> ) levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
• Humidity levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Does your employer have air quality standards in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Are the air quality standards in line with the World Health Organisation's Air Quality Guidelines? <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is good air quality promoted by a functional and regularly serviced air filtration and/or ventilation system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is air flow (of 10 litres per second per person) assured in all areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/what-are-the-who-air-quality-guidelines>

	Yes	No	Notes
Is the air filtration system sufficient to reduce the likelihood of airborne transmission of illness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is air quality assessed in all outdoor workplaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Is appropriate PPE available to protect workers from pollution/poor outdoor air quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Is provision made for work to be avoided/limited where pollution/poor outdoor air quality is high, or for work to be shifted to lower-pollution areas/times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... ..... .....