



Wellbeing Resources

The Disabled Police Association

Beat The Heat In The Workplace

With summer upon us and temperatures on the rise, staying cool has become a top priority, especially for people with disabilities or long term conditions. Whether you are in the office, agile working our out in the open, it's important not to get overheated or dehydrated. So what can you do to help in the workplace.

Wear Light Clothes

In the summer, both lightweight and light coloured clothes are best for surviving the heat. Natural fabrics such as cotton, linen and silk are best because they absorb sweat, and its evaporation will help you stay cool. Artificial fabrics such as polyester and rayon tend to be heavier and are not so absorbent.



While dark colours absorb light and heat, lighter colours reflect it. If you must wear a suit, try one that is white or light grey instead of black or navy blue. The same goes for blouses.

Those in operational type roles which require a uniform, alternatives to the wiccan shirt should be made available such as cotton shirts. For those forces who use baseball hats, this should minimise direct sunlight onto the face and eyes.

Cover Up

It may sound counter intuitive, but in some instances wearing more clothing may help you stay cool. Make sure you wear loose clothes to allow air to circulate.

Close A Window

While a breeze is always nice, sometimes all you are doing by opening a window in extreme heat is letting hot air in, unless it is significantly cooler outside. Even worse,

you are in an air conditioned office when you are letting cool air out. Drawing a blind to keep the sun out can also help to lower temperatures indoors.

Stay Hydrated



When it is hot outside, you sweat more and lose fluids. Drinking water will keep you healthy and cool. There are other ways that water can ease the heat. A few cool drops on your wrists and the back of your neck can help lower your body temperature. Alternatively, keep a spray bottle on hand and give yourself a nice mist every hour.

Follow The Sun

If you know you have to do something physically strenuous, try and schedule it for first thing in the morning while its still a bit cooler. The longer the sun is up the hotter it gets, and so it becomes more likely that you will overheat. If you can avoid going out between 10am and 3pm when its hottest – and if you are outside, don't forget sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat.

Stay Down

Heat rises, so the lower you go the cooler it gets. Even going one floor down can make a big difference.

Eat Small Meals

That nice warm feeling that comes after a big meal isn't just in your head. When you eat a large meal, your body must work harder to digest it, pushing your metabolism into overdrive. Try to have small snacks throughout the day instead of larger meals and you will feel much cooler.



Avoid Caffeine



While many simply cannot function without their daily fix, forgoing your morning tea or coffee can help you stay cool. Caffeine increases your heart rate and blood flow and speeds up your metabolism, all of which raises your body temperature. The same goes

for beverages with a high sugar content, which can have similar effects.

Frozen Treats

So what snacks are best for keeping you cool? Ice cream and ice lollies certainly work, but frozen fruit is much healthier choice. Pop some watermelon or pineapple slices or some grapes into the freezer and a few hours later you will have a sweet, cold, and healthy treat. Frozen lemon and lime slices are also great for keeping your drinks cool and refreshing.

Avoid Hot Devices

Phones, tablets, laptops and other devices are all made of metal, which absorbs heat. Worse than that, portable devices all have batteries that can overheat, especially in summer. Try to keep your devices in bags, away from your skin and out of your pockets. If you work on a laptop, try using an external keyboard. Otherwise, the components most likely to overheat will be right under your fingertips.

Avoid Long Journeys For Meetings

Everyone is working in a fast pace environment going from meeting to meeting. For some with specific disabilities such as diabetes for example, the body had to work a lot harder when the weather is hot. Try to avoid spending too much time travelling in the car which may increase your body temperature. Make use of video conferencing or Skype meetings which not only affects the carbon footprint, but wellbeing too.



Flexible Working

The Police Service is a 24/7 operation, keeping our communities safe and feeling safe. However more flexible ways of working may be beneficial. Things like more frequent short breaks or sliding shifts to times of the day where it is cooler.

Air Conditioning / Fans

If possible, let people have access to portable fans which are really useful if the temperature is below 35 degrees centigrade. Alternatively work in buildings which have adequate air conditioning.



Is There A Maximum Temperature?

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 says **that** your employer must maintain a reasonable **temperature** where **you work**, but **it** does not specify a **maximum temperature**. **There** is a minimum **temperature** of 16°C, or 13°C if your **work** involves considerable physical activity.

British summer time can be unpredictable, but being prepared for any potential heatwave in the workplace can minimise issues around heat exhaustion and heat stroke.