

EN
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Answer given by Mr Schmit
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.11.2024)

The Commission takes the risks of extreme heat at work very seriously. High temperatures at work can cause significant health issues, both for outdoor and indoor workplaces.

The existing EU legislation on occupational safety and health (OSH) offers robust protection for workers against all types of OSH risks, with the OSH Directive 89/391/EEC¹ addressing general protection, including risks from high temperatures and other weather extremes at work.

In addition, the Workplace Directive 89/654/EEC² stipulates that during working hours, the temperature in rooms containing workplaces must be adequate for human beings, and that when workers are employed at workstations outdoor, they are protected against inclement weather conditions. Similar provisions, for workers working in indoor and outdoor workplaces exist in the Construction Sites Directive 92/57/EEC³, the Fishing Vessels Directive 93/103/EC⁴ and the extractive industries Directives 92/104/EEC⁵ and 92/91/EEC⁶.

EU OSH Directives lay down minimum requirements and Member States may adopt more stringent protective measures including by setting maximum permissible temperatures at the place of work. It is primarily for the national authorities to enforce national measures transposing EU Directives.

Tripartite stakeholders of the Advisory Committee for Safety and Health at Work are also currently working on a draft opinion on possible future action in the area of climate change, heat at work and OSH. This will feed the Commission's reflection as regards the possible way forward.

¹ OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31989L0391>

² OJ L 393 30.12.1989, p. 1 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex:31989L0654>

³ OJ L 245, 26.8.1992, p. 6 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/57/oj>

⁴ OJ L 307, 13.12.1993, p. 1 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A31993L0103>

⁵ OJ L 404, 31.12.1992, p. 10 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:31992L0104>

⁶ OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 9 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:31992L0091>