

It's Just Too Hot! What Do I Do?

by Karen Shaw

Although not outlined in the WCB Reg., a phone conversation with a WCB agent stated the following temperature guidelines:

Winter: Minimum -- 20.4 degrees C or 69 F; Maximum -- 24.4 C or 76 F

Summer: Minimum -- 23.3 degrees C or 74 F; Maximum -- 27.2 C or 81 F

Note that the WCB Reg does emphasize "comfort range". See article below.

If it is too hot in your building, or there is a lack of adequate air, and you're wondering what to do, follow the same directions as when it is too cold. See the following article.

I've added 2 other ideas that may bring speedier relief. They are:

1. Instead of phoning Trouble Calls, send them an e-mail at tc@plantops.ubc.ca. There are 3 advantages to this:

- Trouble Calls will immediately respond with a workorder number.
- Your supervisor and/or tradespeople will be impressed that you have this knowledge
- Knowing the workorder number makes record keeping and follow up much easier

2. If you do not have a response from your supervisor or about plans to rectify the situation WITHIN 4 WORKING HOURS, call the Union Office at (604) 822-1494, Karen (604) 822-5478 or Richard (604) 822-2406.

WCB Regulation 4.80 states, "The employer must ensure that temperature and humidity levels within the indoor work environment are maintained with acceptable comfort ranges, as far as is practicable." Note the words "must ensure" and "comfort ranges".

There is absolutely no reason why a worker must endure several days or weeks of high temperatures.

If you are among those who have found your office too hot lately, here are some things to know and some things to do.

WHAT TO KNOW:

- Anyone at Anytime can call WCB about a work-related safety issue.
- The University's Safety Policy
- WCB Regulation 3.12 & 3.13
- WCB Regulation 4.80
- Occupational Environment Regulations (WCB'74) Article 9.006

WHAT TO DO:

1. Requisition a regular and accurate thermometer, preferably one that uses Celsius and Fahrenheit.
2. Keep a diary. Note the temperature several times a day over a period of time. Also note who said what to whom. (Who reported the temperatures? What commitment was made by the supervisor, Plant Ops., or the University? What kind of action was taken? and when?)

3. Follow this flowchart (an adaptation of WCB 3.12).

- Assess the situation. Is the temperature adequate?

If the answer is YES, return to work.

If NO, go to next step.

- Inform your supervisor. Did that resolve the issue?

YES, return to work; NO, next step.

- Investigate the issue with your supervisor and a member of your department's safety committee or another worker of your choice. Did that resolve the issue? YES, return to work; NO, next step.

- At this point, you may call WCB (273-2266). If you decide to call WCB, please inform the Union Office (822-1494) and Health, Safety and Environment (822-2029). NOTE: WCB recommends that this call be made jointly by worker and employer, but it is not mandatory that both parties make the call.
- Unless told otherwise by the Union, follow the advice given by WCB.