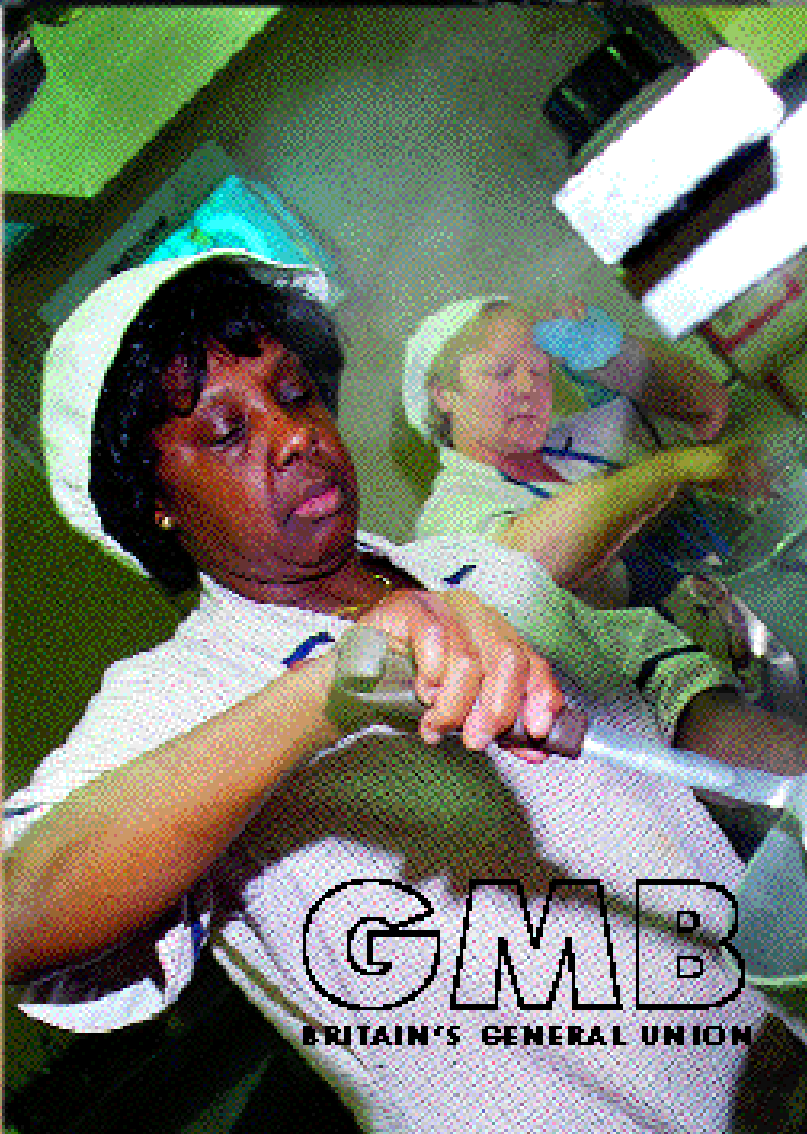
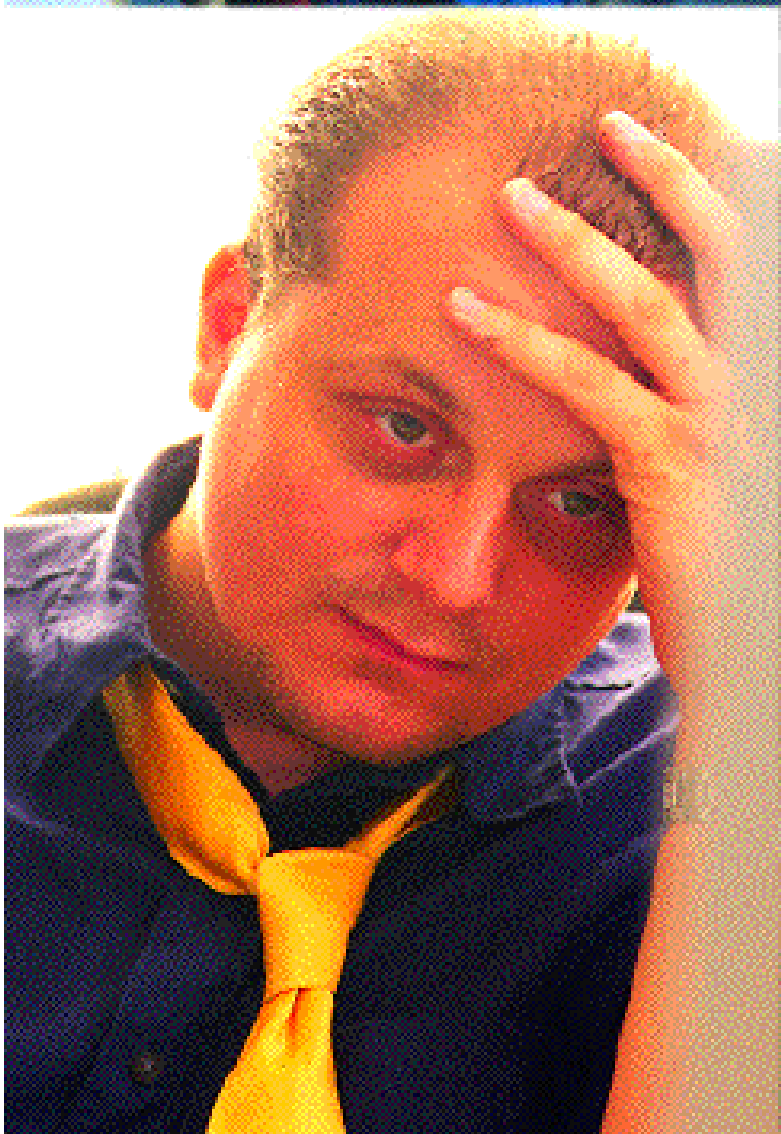
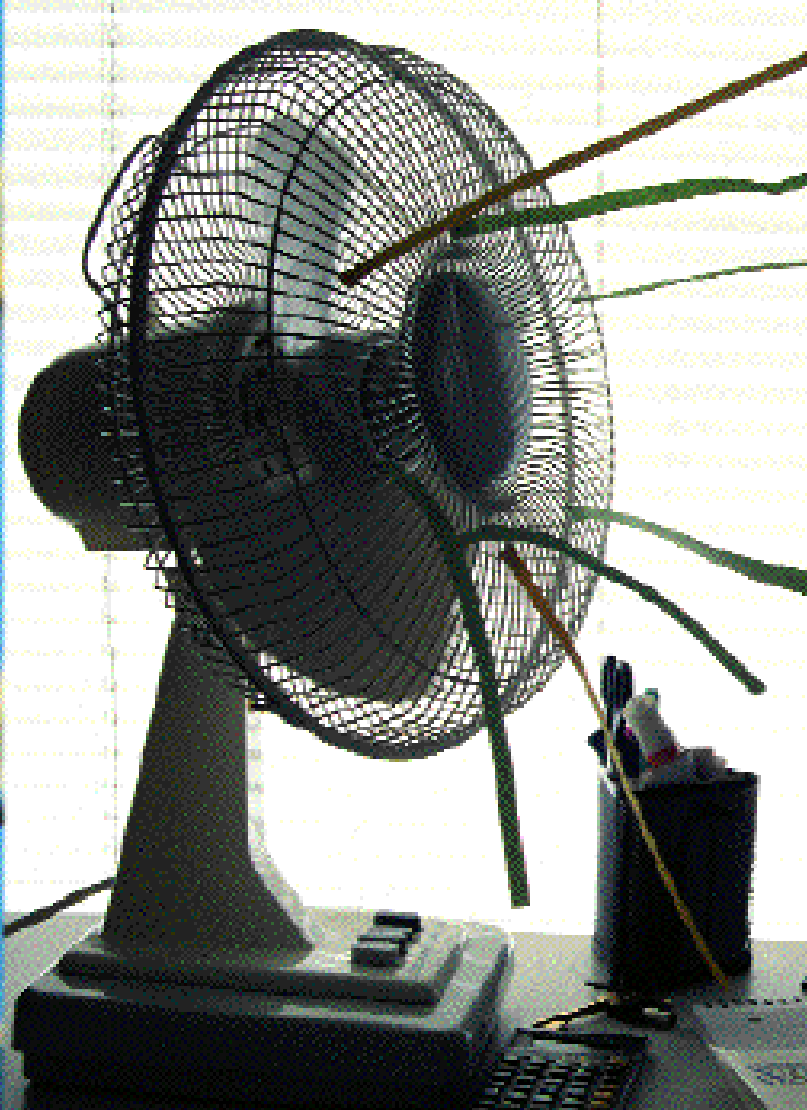
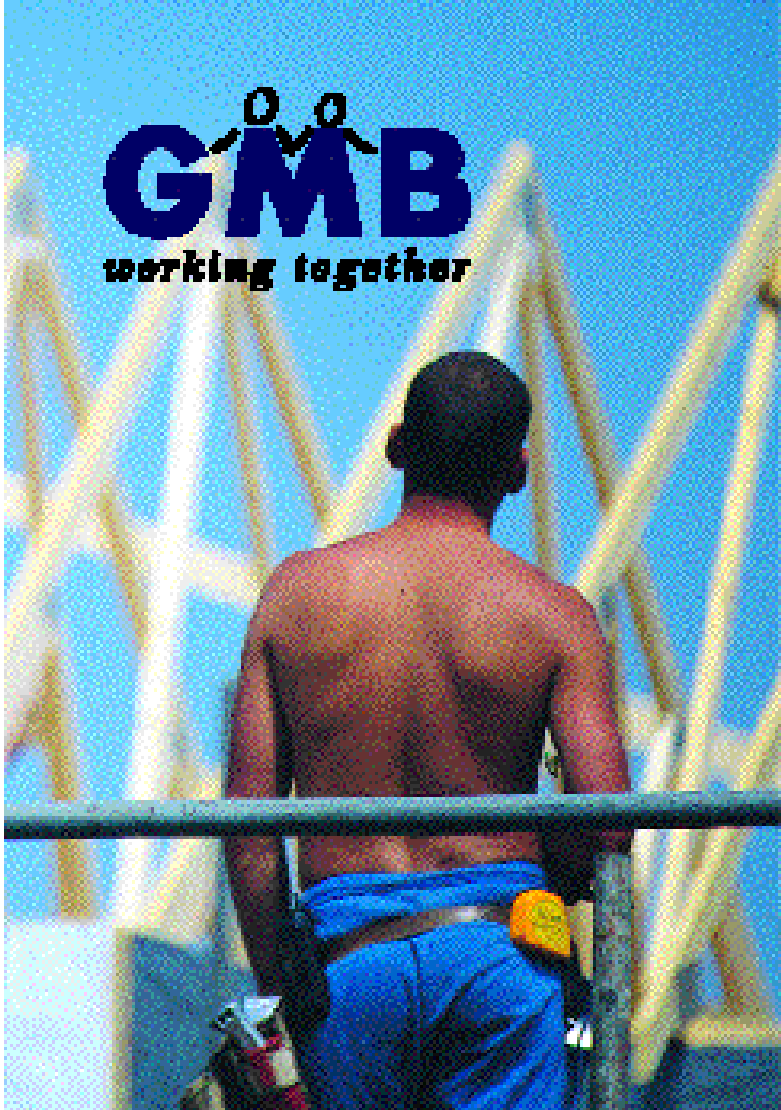


GMB
working together



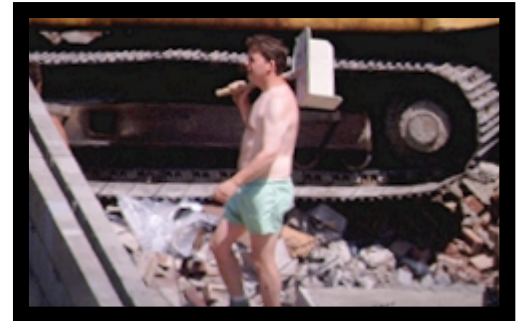
GMB
BRITAIN'S GENERAL UNION

Health & Safety

AS temperature's rise, workers in all industries suffer. Working in excessive heat is not only uncomfortable **IT CAN BE DANGEROUS!**

Hot work, whether in an office or outdoors can lead to accidents and injuries. The GMB has produced this leaflet to inform you of your rights and lets you know what your employer should be doing.

All employees have the legal right to work in a safe and healthy environment. If you are not getting fair treatment at work you should contact the GMB - NOW!



HOT WORK the problem outdoors

GMB members who work outside face very clear dangers from hot work and exposure to sunlight. Below are some of the hazards that outdoor workers may be exposed to - and the duties that employers have to protect workers.

Cancer

The latest figures show that skin cancer affects around 5% of the population, currently over 30,000 people develop skin cancer each year - and that figure is rising. For outdoor workers the risk of skin cancer is twice as high, and as the ozone layer further depletes outdoor workers will be increasingly at risk.

Listed below are the main types of cancers common in outdoor workers:

- Malignant Melanoma - can spread throughout the body. Warning signs are irregular moles that often grow in size.
- Squamous cell cancer - look for scaly lumps, nodules or non-healing sores.
- Basal cell cancer (rodent ulcer) - a nodule that grows over a long period of time.

The cancers tend to develop on exposed parts of workers bodies such as the face, hands and forearms. Many of the cancers do not appear until old age; over 90% are curable.

Heat stress

The symptoms of heat stress are clammy skin, light-headedness, slurred speech, rapid pulse, fatigue, nausea, and short temper. Heat stress can lead to heat stroke.

Heat stroke

This is more severe than heat stress - sweating will stop, body temperature will be high and the skin is hot and dry. Confusion and loss of consciousness can occur. Heat stroke requires immediate medical treatment.

Other problems

Prolonged exposure to sunlight can speed up the ageing process. Skin becomes rough, dry and wrinkled. Sunburn can also occur, and exposure to UV rays can trigger cold sores and lupus. Eyes can also be affected by exposure leading to problems in the long term.

What YOUR Employer should be doing

Provide a safe and healthy workplace - Your employer has a legal duty to ensure that you work in a safe and healthy environment. This means your employer must assess any potential risk to your health - and take action to reduce these risks.

Clothing

As a general rule the hotter the day the more covered up you should be. Clothing should be loose fitting and of a close woven fabric. Hats should be worn to protect your head, and sunscreen used on any unprotected parts of the body. Employers have a legal duty to provide any protective equipment that is necessary for you to do your job safely.

Eye protection

Sunglasses may be necessary especially on jobs with a lot of glare. In these instances your employer should provide protective sunglasses free of charge. The glasses should meet British Standard 2724 and should have a glare protection factor of over 3.1 (this information should be on the box or label).

Sunscreen

High sun protection factor sunscreen should be used (over 15+) and you should reapply it regularly on exposed areas of your body.

Welfare

Your employer should make sure that you have plenty of breaks in a shaded area, and should provide you with free cold drinks. Where possible your employer should organise work so that you are working indoors at the hottest time of the day.

feeling the heat?



HOT WORK the problem indoors

Long hot summers are becoming standard in Britain. It is not uncommon at the height of summer for offices and other workplaces to record temperatures of 37°C (95°F). This not only makes work tiring for employees - it is also a potential cause of accidents.

We all know what happens when the temperature begins to rise at work. People perspire without moving; stress levels rise; concentration levels fall; mistakes creep in; work rates go down and accident levels begin to rise.

If you are doing manual or strenuous work there is the additional danger of dehydration and heat stress as the body loses liquid and the core temperature of the body begins to rise.

What does the law say

All employees are protected by law from having to work in excessively hot temperatures. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 states that the temperature within workplaces 'must be reasonable'. Unfortunately the Regulations do not define an upper limit for what is reasonable.

The GMB believes that a sensible limit would be near to that which the World Health Organisation has recommended, this is 75°F.

The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers recommends that an acceptable temperature limit for most kinds of work is between 16°C and 23°C (60.8°F to 72°F). For different areas of work it recommends the following:

- Sedentary work 19°C
- Light work 16°C
- Heavy work 13°C

In specific types of workplace the recommended temperatures are:

- Offices 20°C
- Hospital wards 19°C
- Warehouses 16°C
- Canteens and dining rooms 20°C
- Shops and Showrooms 18°C

These limits are supported by the GMB - and the union is working to ensure that ALL of our members work in a reasonable temperature.

What YOUR employer should be doing

Your employer must comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. This means your workplace should have a reasonable temperature at all times. Listed below are some of the measures that your employer should be taking.

Ventilation

The law requires each enclosed workplace to be ventilated so that a continual flow of fresh or purified air is provided. Opening windows can do this - but if this does not produce continual fresh air then mechanical ventilation must be provided.

Provide air cooling plant/air conditioning

Where temperatures reach uncomfortably high levels the employer must take reasonable measures to reduce the heat. In most cases the provision of air conditioning does not entail major expense to the employer. Most offices would only require the hire or purchase of stand-alone plug in cooling units.

Shade windows

By providing blinds and shades your employer can help to reduce temperature levels, cheaply and effectively

Relax dress codes

Having to wear a heavy uniform or official company garments can increase the stress and discomfort caused by excessive temperatures. Employers should relax dress codes and allow staff to wear loose fitting, comfortable clothes.

Provide cold drinks and allow breaks

When temperatures reach high levels employers should provide drinks free of charge - particularly cold water and soft drinks. Employees should also be allowed to take more frequent breaks from work areas and sit in a cooler area.

HOW THE GMB CAN HELP

Working together you and your union can take action to reduce temperature at work. The GMB has been concerned for some time about our members working in hot temperatures and below is our five point plan for reducing heat in the workplace:

Reducing hot temperature at work - GMB 5 point plan

Point 1 Monitor the temperature - Safety Representatives and members affected should monitor the air temperature and keep a daily record. By law your employer must supply thermometers in every part of the workplace.

Point 2 Take complaints to the employer - GMB Safety Representatives have the legal right to take up complaints on behalf of their members. If you have a problem let your GMB Safety Representative know.

Point 3 Report any ill health effects in the accident book. The accident book can be used to record any 'personal injury' at work. Ill health effects from temperatures can be classed as such. The accident book can also be used as evidence in any claims made against an employer and the Health and Safety Executive Inspector may want to look at the employer's accident book.

Point 4 If you are having problems with temperature your Safety Representative can call in the Regional Organiser who will raise the matter on your behalf. The GMB is the only union to have a full time Health and Safety Officer in each of our Region's - they can also be contacted for advice.

Point 5 Where managers refuse to try to reduce temperature levels - inform the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The HSE are the Government body who enforces safety standards at work. You will find their details in the local phone book.

REMEMBER IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF THE GMB WE CAN'T HELP YOU!

Independent research has shown that people who are in a trade union are **50% LESS LIKELY TO HAVE AN ACCIDENT** than those who are not in a trade union.

<i>Union/non union</i>	<i>Injury Rate</i>	<i>Actual injuries in one year</i>
Trade Union Recognised	5.3	58,300
No Trade Union Recognised	10.9	181,500

Source: Reilly, Paci and Hall; British Journal of Industrial Relations, 33:2, June 1995

In other words:

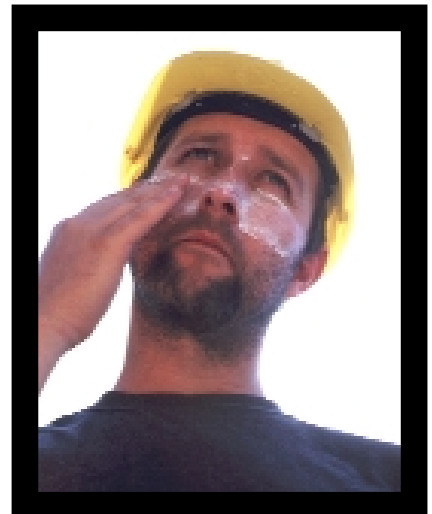
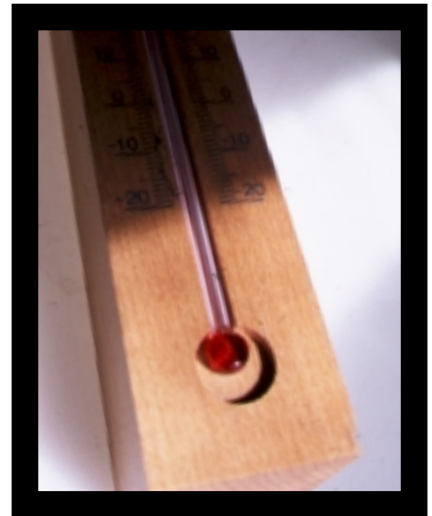
YOU ARE TWICE AS SAFE IN THE GMB

The GMB is Britain's leading union for health and safety. In each of our Regions we have a specialist Health and Safety Officer who can offer advice and help to make your workplace safer. The union also has a National Health and Safety Department with 4 staff to back up the Regions. **JOIN THE GMB NOW!!**



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you're safer in **THE GMB!**