

# Independent Guide

## What are the office temperature regulations?



Independent workplace compliance

### Temperature legislation

The Workplace (Health, Safety, and Welfare) Regulations state that building temperature should be 'reasonable' during working hours. The Approved Code of Practice provides further clarification on temperature range, detailing that workrooms should be at least 16 °C for most types of work, and draughts and humidity must be accounted for. There is currently no legal maximum temperature, although heat is classed as a potential risk and should therefore be risk assessed in workplaces of high exposure. In summary, legislation says that office temperature should ideally be between 16 and 24 °C.

### What is the ideal office temperature for productivity?

As temperature is so open to interpersonal preference, it is hard to define a specific ideal temperature. The Health and Safety Executive state that temperature should be 'reasonable', which can mean various things to different people. Given the nature of office work, sitting still for extended periods and not partaking in any rigorous physical effort, a warmer temperature would be preferable to work comfortably.

Research suggests that the ideal temperature for an office should be from 20 to 25 °C for maximum productivity and comfort. Studies have found that indoor temperatures exceeding 25 °C yielded declines in performance, and that temperature should be at least 20.4 °C in winter to optimise employees' willingness to work.

With seasonal changes to outside temperature, it is recommended that in winter months, an office environment should be between 21 and 23 °C, and in summer should be between 22 and 24 °C. However, other influencing factors such as draughts, humidity, and air quality can influence productivity and comfort of office employees. In summary, given the current ISO standard for office temperature and the results of numerous studies, optimal productivity can be seen in the temperature range of 21 to 25 °C.

### What is the best temperature for office air conditioning?

The recommended office air conditioning temperature should satisfy between 70 and 80% of those working there. The UK government deduced that 23 °C is the ideal temperature for air conditioning in an office space. However, this is potentially influenced by other factors such as the time of year, humidity, and personal preference.

Satisfactory conditions are subject to the comfort and happiness of occupants. People are more likely to be more tolerant of colder temperatures in the winter and warmer temperatures in the summer. The recommended range of 21-24 °C is thought to be optimal for comfort and productivity, therefore would be the ideal range for air conditioning. With personal comfort being so subjective, an independent audit of conditions could help to satisfy potential complaints about office conditions and could help to deduce other causes of discomfort felt by employees. Other factors like carbon dioxide level, humidity, and airflow can make a reasonably temperate office feel uncomfortable.

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