



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

BUILDING SAFETY

Freezing in the winter. Stifling in the summer. Leaky roofs. Windows painted shut.

We deserve a comfortable working environment. And your school has a legal obligation to ensure a safe working environment.

Here's everything you need to know.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

It is your employer's responsibility to undertake risk assessments and to eliminate or mitigate all known workplace risks.

Assessments must be undertaken by a 'competent person' and the results should be available to staff. Your school must consult with staff on all matters of health and safety.

TEMPERATURE

Under UK law, workplace temperatures must be 'reasonable', with a minimum temperature of 16 Celsius.

While there is no maximum workplace temperature, the Health and Safety Executive makes it clear that:

"All workers are entitled to an environment where risks are properly controlled. Heat is classed as a hazard and comes with legal obligations like any other hazard."

The World Health Organisation recommends a maximum workplace temperature of 24 Celcius.

VENTILATION

Employers must ensure all workplaces are sufficiently ventilated.

Your employer's ventilation risk assessment should:

- look for areas lacking natural (windows/doors) or mechanical ventilation (fans/air ducts)
- identify windows that do not easily open or close
- consult staff on whether 'heat and/or cold stress' is an issue in the workplace
- check for draughts, odours, or stuffy rooms
- consider using a CO2 monitor to identify poor ventilation

The Health and Safety Executive recommends ten litres of fresh air per second, per person for most commercial buildings.

OTHER BUILDING ISSUES

This can include things like:

- A leaky roof or window
- Cracked windows or a window that won't open or close
- Excessive damp and/or black mould
- Excessive noise
- Classroom overcrowding

Once a risk has been identified, your school is obligated to do a risk assessment and take all reasonable steps to protect staff.

DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE

If your workplace is uncomfortable or unsafe, support is available. Contact the TEFL Workers' Union at tefl@iww.org.uk to get support for you and your workmates.

For information on the law, you can also contact ACAS on their free helpline. If you want to make a complaint, go to the website of the Health and Safety Executive.