

Climate Risk and Air Quality Project



SAFETY ROUTES TO TACKLING CLIMATE RISKS AND AIR QUALITY

Latest update May 2026

This project was set up to develop training materials which can be used on Health and Safety Trade Union Education courses at different levels, including stages 1,2 and diploma course or trade union equivalent courses and standalone modules.

Greater Manchester Hazards Centre

Background to the Project

This education pack has been developed as a result of funding made available by NSCCT through Greater Manchester Hazards Trust, to advance policy with workers on improving air quality and climate risks.

Many thanks to those who contributed, commentated and reviewed the materials. In particular the following people have been involved in writing the materials:

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Climate Risks: An overview

Introduction

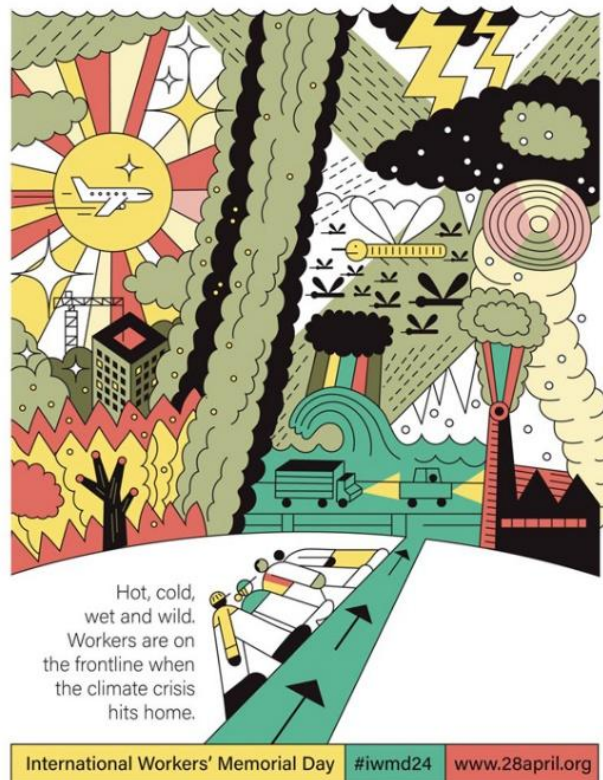
Rory O’Neill from the awards winning Hazards Magazine says ‘more than 70% of the global work force is likely to be exposed to climate change-related health hazards’ making it an occupational safety and health crisis. This is something that must NOT be ignored.

Climate change is a **trade union issue** because it is already reshaping everyday working conditions, affecting workloads, job security and the fairness of how workers are treated.

Climate change is a **health & safety issue** because it creates hazards or worsens hazards that already exist in workplaces—such as heat, poor air quality, storms and flooding—making work more dangerous and more unpredictable.

Globally, changes to the climate and deteriorating air quality are causing workers to challenge unsafe working conditions, future job security including **just transition** and policies that create further harm to the environment without any climate risk assessments being carried out.

Working in a bad climate



Climate change – A warming world

There is plenty of jargon around climate change and one of the purposes of this coursebook is to try and make sense of it. Words often used are climate **mitigation** and climate **adaptation**. Unions need to respond to both.

Mitigation - involves actions to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. The aim being to lessen the impact of **future** climate change by addressing its root causes such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.

Adaptation – refers to ways of adjusting to climate change effects based on the **current or projected** impacts of warming. These include air pollution, extreme weather, food insecurity and sea level rise.

This education pack will focus primarily on climate adaptation and air quality

Section 1

Climate change – the here and now

**(Health and Safety Stage 1 – understanding
the narrative)**

Safety Routes to tackling climate risks and air quality

Outline and Tutor notes

Title – Climate Change the here and now – understanding the narrative

Level 1 Safety reps, reps and activists Duration: 3 hours

Session 1: Pre course material
Objective: Establish an understanding of the terminology and how climate risks are impacting on the world of work
Activities
Subject areas
Group Discussion (20 mins): Strengths and weaknesses of current frameworks
Report back and summary (20 mins):
Session 2: (1 hour)
Objective:
Activities:
Subject areas –
Group discussion
Report back and summary (20 mins):
Session 3: (1 hour)
Objective:
Activities: - Presentation (15 mins):
Group Work (30 mins):
Report back and summary (15 mins):

Pre-course material

Complete the two pre-course activities prior to the next in-course activities.

Activity 1: Talking Point – Climate Adaptation

Read the quotes below and compare it to the one from Donald Trump presented here:

The US President said that the U.N.'s predictions about the impacts of climate change have not come to fruition and that they have been exaggerated or are incorrect. The president called it "the greatest con job perpetrated by the world." (Speech to the UN Sept 2025)

And also the deputy leader of Reform UK has said his party would scrap "net stupid zero" policies which were 'destroying jobs in the oil and gas sector'.

Do you think the UN statements exaggerate the extent of global climate risk and are they part of 'a global con job'?

Make notes to support discussions in the classroom

● How bad is it?

"The truth is stark. We're hurtling into unliveable temperatures and ecosystem collapse. Floods, storms, droughts and wildfires are destroying lives and livelihoods. Millions are being pushed to the edge... or over it". Asad Rehman, CEO of Friends of the Earth 2025

"Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing, global temperatures keep rising, and our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator," Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General, 2022

"The climate and nature crisis threatens all aspects of British life, from national security to the food supply - but solutions exist." UK National Emergency briefing on the climate and nature crisis

• Rich and Poor Nations

“In terms of climate justice, it is a disgrace that most vulnerable nations are being left stranded with the impacts of a climate crisis they did nothing to create. We cannot accept a future where the rich are protected in air-conditioned bubbles while the rest of humanity is lashed by lethal weather in unliveable lands.” Antonio Guterres

“Fairer climate finance and an end to the crippling debt and high interest rates that many developing nations have to endure is not a question of charity, but about “enlightened self-interest”.

Antonio Guterres

• Rich and Poor People

The richest 1% emit as much planet-heating pollution as two thirds of humanity, according to a report published by Oxfam in 2023 [Richest 1% emit as much planet-heating pollution as two-thirds of humanity | Oxfam International](#). The research also shows:

- *Carbon emissions of richest 1 percent surged to 16 percent of world’s total CO2 emissions in 2019.*
- *Their carbon emissions are enough to cause 1.3 million excess deaths due to heat.*
- *Unequal countries suffer seven times more flood fatalities than more equal countries.*
- *Fairly taxing the super-rich would help curb both climate change and inequality.*

Activity 2: Talking Point – Climate Justice

“The super-rich are plundering and polluting the planet to the point of destruction, leaving humanity choking on extreme heat, floods and drought,” said Oxfam International interim Executive Director Amitabh Behar.

“For years we’ve fought to end the era of fossil fuels to save millions of lives and our planet. It’s clearer than ever this will be impossible until we, too, end the era of extreme wealth,”

Do you think that climate justice can be achieved **without** the need to tackle the issue of wealth inequalities?

Make notes to support discussions during the course.

In course activities:

Climate misinformation

According to a **recent survey by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero** there is evidence of public concern about climate change – 80% of people in the UK are at least fairly concerned with 37% very concerned. [DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Headline findings, Winter 2024, UK - GOV.UK](#)

Despite this there is a proliferation of climate dis-, mis- and mal-information (DMMI) especially on social media. This can spread quickly and, at times, seem quite compelling.

DMMI – a definition

- **Disinformation** is the deliberate creation and/or sharing of false information with the intention to deceive and mislead audiences.
- **Misinformation** is the inadvertent sharing of false information.
- **Malinformation** deliberately misleads by twisting the meaning of truthful information.

The Met Office has produced a toolkit [Tackling climate misinformation - Met Office](#)

Activity 3: – Climate risks and you

Aims: To help you identify:

- the range of climate risks that you experience or think you may experience in your workplace and community
- any other risks that are not included in the risks identified above

Task

Look at climate risks in the **table** below.

1. Identify whether you think you are currently at risk where you work or live
2. Are there any other climate related risks not covered in the list below that should be included?

Report Back

In your groups report back your findings

Table

	Climate Risk	Current Risk (Yes / No / Not sure) in your workplace	Current Risk in your community (Yes / No / Not sure)
1	Air pollution		
2	Extreme heat		
3	Extreme cold		
4	Flooding – rivers, rainwater, sea level		
5	Building damage		
6	Increased fire risks		
7	Infectious diseases		
8	Food shortages		
9	Water shortages		
10	Supply chains		
11	Storms		
12	Environmental and occupational pollution including: PFAS / chemicals / pesticides		
13	Brown field sites, Landfills and off gassing		
14	Biological Risks		

Activity 4 : Linking Climate Change to Everyday Safety Issues at Work

Aim:

- To help reps recognise how climate impacts are already affecting day-to-day safety working conditions
- Identify existing union and employer policies that may be helpful.

Task 1

Identify how climate impacts make current safety issues worse. Write down two examples from your own workplace where climate impacts are already affecting (or could soon affect):

- Air quality
- work-related stress
- workload
- building conditions

Task 2

Identify vulnerable jobs or work activities. Choose two job roles from your workplace and list:

1. What climate-related risks they face (e.g., heat stress, poor air quality, unsafe travel).
2. Why they are more exposed than others.

Task 3

Link climate risks to existing employer or union policies

List any current workplace policies that could be relevant when considering how to control climate risks. For example, Air quality / COSHH Procedures

Report Back

Each group will be asked to share:

1. One everyday safety issue made worse by climate impacts
2. One job role most affected
3. One existing policy that can support union action on climate risks

Tutor Notes

Climate risks often feel distant, but they are already showing up in the workplace through issues reps deal with every day:

- Workload & stress: Heatwaves, transport disruption and rising sickness can increase pressure on staff.
- Overheating: Even office environments become hotspots, reducing concentration and raising accident risk.
- Air quality: Poor ventilation, pollution drift and indoor contaminants worsen respiratory health.
- Extreme weather: Flooding, storms and cold snaps damage buildings, disrupt commutes and increase slips/trips.
- PPE problems: Many uniforms and PPE trap heat and increase risk.
- Fatigue & hydration: Heat makes routine tasks more demanding and increases mistakes.

Climate change doesn't create "new" safety issues — it intensifies the ones reps already manage.

Roles, identifying vulnerable jobs or work activities

Think about roles where workers:

- work outdoors or travel between sites
- work in poorly ventilated or older buildings
- do heavy physical labour
- work alone, in remote areas or small spaces
- rely on PPE/uniforms that trap heat
- have little control over their environment (e.g., call centres, classrooms, kitchens)

Example of workplace Policies

- Heat-stress guidance
- Air quality / COSHH procedures
- Workload, staffing and wellbeing policies
- Flexible working or safe-travel arrangements
- Risk-assessment procedures
- Equality and menopause-related adjustments

Sources of Information

[National Emergency Briefing](#)

[Climate Risk Register Guide and Tool | EAUC](#)

[AUDE : Association of University Directors of Estates](#)

[HR-Challenges-UK-ebook.pdf](#)

[london_leading_case_studies_in_climate_resilience_leadership.pdf](#)

[Climate Risk Mapping - London Datastore](#)

[Climate change and health and safety checklist 0.pdf](#)

[TUCAN - Greener Jobs Alliance](#)

[TUCAN Resources - Greener Jobs Alliance](#)

[Workers-Guide-to-action-on-indoor-workplace-air-pollution-WEBSITE.pdf](#)

A browser that plants trees with it's ad revenue and low energy data centres

<https://www.ecosia.org/>

Section 2: Union Action for Safer Workplaces

(Health and Safety Stage II)

Safety Routes to tackling climate risks and air quality

Outline and Tutor Notes

Title – Union Action for Safer Workplaces

Level 2 Safety reps, reps and activists Duration: 3 hours

Session 1: Pre course material
Objective
Activities
Subject areas
Group Discussion (20 mins): Strengths and weaknesses of current frameworks
Report back and summary (20 mins):
Session 2: (1 hour)
Objective
Activities
Subject areas
Group discussion
Report back and summary (20 mins):
Session 3: (1 hour)
Objective
Activities: - Presentation (15 mins):
Group Work (30 mins):
Report back and summary (15 mins):

PreCourse Activity - Quiz: *Climate Change and Worker Safety – Multiple Choice Worksheet*

Complete the quiz

Please read each question carefully and select the correct answer. This worksheet is designed for adult learners in the UK.

1. What percentage of global workers reported experiencing a disaster related to a natural hazard in the past five years?
 - a) 5%
 - b) 10%
 - c) 20%
 - d) 25%
2. Why are ocean workers considered particularly high-risk in the context of climate change?
 - a) They work in isolated environments with limited access to emergency services
 - b) They are exposed to high levels of air pollution
 - c) They have shorter working hours
 - d) They are less likely to be trained in safety procedures
3. What is the major effect of excessive heat on workers?
 - a) Increased productivity
 - b) Reduced risk of injury
 - c) Higher rates of dehydration and heatstroke
 - d) Improved mental health
4. Which group of workers is most vulnerable to air pollution?
 - a) Office workers
 - b) Remote workers
 - c) Outdoor workers in urban areas
 - d) Freelancers
5. What are the indirect risks of climate change for workers?
 - a) Increased wages
 - b) Job instability and mental health issues
 - c) Better working conditions
 - d) Reduced working hours

6. How does climate change affect workers in agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors?

- a) It improves crop yields
- b) It reduces exposure to natural hazards
- c) It increases exposure to extreme weather and unsafe conditions
- d) It eliminates the need for protective equipment

7. What risk do construction workers face due to extreme weather events?

- a) Delayed promotions
- b) Increased exposure to falling objects and unstable structures
- c) Reduced need for safety gear
- d) Improved working hours

8. What role does local knowledge play in protecting workers from climate-related risks?

- a) It helps reduce wages
- b) It is irrelevant to safety
- c) It supports tailored safety interventions
- d) It increases bureaucracy

9. Why is more research needed on workplace interventions in low-and-middle income countries?

- a) To reduce the cost of safety equipment
- b) To understand which interventions are most effective
- c) To eliminate the need for training
- d) To promote remote working

10. How can new technologies used to combat climate change, introduce risks to workers?

- a) They reduce the need for safety training
- b) They are always safe and well-tested
- c) They may involve hazardous materials or unfamiliar procedures
- d) They eliminate all traditional risks

Tutor Notes

The stronger the union, the cooler the workplace

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), globally, 2.41 billion workers, 70 per cent of the working population, are exposed to excessive heat.

This results in 22.85 million non-fatal injuries and 18,970 deaths every year.¹

This is not a problem just for countries we might traditionally think of as hot, in Africa or the Middle East.

It is a problem affecting workers in the UK right now.

In the heat wave of June/July 2025, it's been estimated that nearly 600 people died because of excessive heat.²

Many of these will have been workers, but their deaths are unlikely to have been recorded as linked to their work.

A workplace fatality is the most extreme consequence of excessive heat, but it is not the only one. Consequences for workers can include:

- Workers risk heat exhaustion
- Heat stress, and dehydration.
- Fall in concentration – leading to an increased possibility of accidents.

The science is very clear. There WILL be many more heat waves, what scientists call “extreme weather events”. These heat waves will result in deaths of workers, unless trade unions act.

We have evidence from all over the world, that when trade unions do get involved, as safety representatives, through collective bargaining or campaigning, then the risks to workers can be reduced.

Put simply, trade union action can make the workplace cooler, and that will result in less ill health and less deaths.

That's why we say: “the stronger the union, the cooler the workplace”

¹ Heat at work: Implications for safety and health. A global review of the science, policy and practice International Labour Organization 2024

² London School of hygiene and tropical medicine, <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2025/nearly-600-heat-related-deaths-expected-uk-heatwave-researchers-estimate>. Accessed 15th October 2025

Deaths in the USA

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in its Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, documented 1,042 U.S. worker deaths due to occupational exposure to environmental heat from 1992-2022, with an average of 34 fatalities per year during that period.

In 2022 alone, BLS reported 43 work-related deaths due to environmental heat exposure.

The BLS Annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) estimates 33,890 work-related heat injuries and illnesses involving days away from work from 2011-2020, which is an average of 3,389 injuries and illnesses occurring each year during this period.³

³ USA Federal Register, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/08/30/2024-14824/heat-injury-and-illness-prevention-in-outdoor-and-indoor-work-settings>

Activity 1: Climate Risk Inspections

Aim:

- To understand what to include in any climate risk inspection
- *Making climate risks visible, relatable, and union-actionable*

Task:

1. Read the introduction alongside the TUC checklist (see link below) and identify which aspects of the checklist are relevant to your workplace.
2. What barriers may exist in undertaking this type of inspection
3. Consider if you need any specific equipment (monitoring) or available information and where you will get this from.

Report

Report back your findings

TUC Checklist: [Climate_change_and_health_and_safety_checklist_0.pdf](#)

Activity 2: Assessing the risks

Aim:

- To identify climate impacted risks in the working environment
- Explore how the risks could be controlled
- Consider what would be included in a Safety Report Inspection Report

Task:

Each group to be assigned a different workplace scenario:

- Office staff
- Bakery workers
- Construction workers
- Teaching assistants
- Community Health workers
- Transport workers

1. Identify the relevant climate impact hazards and assess who could be harmed and how – use the TUC checklist from Activity 1
2. Decide on relevant controls, ensuring that are suitable and sufficient.
3. Highlight 3-5 key risks that you would want to include in any Safety Report inclusive of your suggested risk controls.

Report Back

Report your findings to the group

Tutor Notes

Tutors can use this activity to run a negotiating role play.

Information – i.e. Utilising websites to identify local air quality [About Air Pollution - DEFRA UK Air - GOV.UK](#)

Hierarchy of Risk Reduction – for further information and an example of control options see the table example for Heat.

Activity 3: It's too hot to work, what does the law say?

Aim:

- To understand the legal implications
- Devise health and safety arguments of extreme heat

Task 1

1. List the legislation you think puts a duty on employers to assess and control temperatures at work.
2. What does the law say about minimum and maximum temperatures at work?
3. What does the HSE say about working in extreme weather conditions?

Task 2

Considering your answers to task 1 and Union campaign's to change the legal standards, propose changes you believe should be made. Consider information from the TUC, Hazards Magazine, TUCAN and HeatStrike.

Report Back

Report your findings back to the group

TUTOR NOTES

The law in a nutshell

List

- Employers have general duties to ensure health and safety under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to assess and control risks from work under the Management of Health, Safety, and Welfare Regulations (MHSWR). These legal requirements also cover working outside in the heat.
- Other legislation and standards will also apply

Specifics

- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 says that an employer must maintain a reasonable temperature in the workplace, but it does not specify a maximum temperature: 'During working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable.'

The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) recommends 13°C for heavy work in factories

- 16°C for light work in factories
- 18°C in hospital wards and shops
- 20°C in offices and dining rooms.
- The application of the regulation depends on the nature of the workplace. However,

Campaign

- Unite and TUC are fighting for a maximum temperature set against the type of work and environment work is carried out. We want a change in the law so that employers must attempt to reduce temperatures if they get above 24 degrees C indoors and workers feel uncomfortable. Absolute maximum temperature, set at 30 degrees C (or 27 degrees C for those doing strenuous jobs), to indicate when work should stop. Source: Unite
- Or alternatively "People are experts on their experience with heat. A key neglected area is to adapt to the challenge by acknowledging workers are their own experts." Laurie Parsons of Royal Holloway, University of London.

Air Pollution at Work:

RESOURCES: [Workers-Guide-to-action-on-indoor-workplace-air-pollution-WEBSITE.pdf](#)

Section 3

Union Campaigning for Change for Safer Workplaces from Climate Change

(Health and Safety Diploma)

Outline and Tutor notes

Climate Risks – Level 3 materials

Title – Union Campaigning for change for safer workplaces from climate change

Level 3 – Reps, Full-time Officers and experienced union activists. Duration: 3 hours

Session 1: The law and climate risks (1 hour)
Objective: Evaluate the current legal and policy drivers on climate risks. Identify the range of improvements needed to the current statutory framework
Activities: - Presentation (20 mins): Global and UK climate legal requirements.
Subject areas: Paris Agreement 2015, WHO and other UN standards, Climate Change Act 2008, CCC Climate Adaptation Report, Climate Change Risk Assessment Report, H+S Law.
Group Discussion (20 mins): Strengths and weaknesses of current frameworks
Report back and summary (20 mins): Checklist of key requirements that support union policy objectives
Session 2: Regional, local authority and employer policy and standards (1 hour)
Objective: Evaluate current policy developments in different parts of the UK and different sectors of employment. Identify best practice and how it could be relevant to bargaining objectives in your sector or statutory authority.
Activities: - Presentation (15 mins): Regional and local climate resilience / adaptation policies, sector policies
Subject areas – Regional and local authority climate adaptation plans including the one for the region where the course is located. Employer policies based on course participants but with examples like NHS. Related employer standards eg Insurance industry reports, 3 rd sector and campaign organisations eg Climate emergency scorecards, Friends of the Earth reports
Group discussion (25 mins): 3 groups – 1 x regional policy, 1 x local authority, 1 x employer

Report back and summary (20 mins): Key findings from policy reviews and priorities for future engagement
Session 3: Union policy and campaign initiatives (1 hour)
Objective: Assess current TUC and individual union policy on climate risk
Activities: - Presentation (15 mins): Selection of union and campaign examples
Group Work (30 mins): Select a climate risk topic. Draft a list of demands using the checklist
Report back and summary (15 mins): Present and discuss group demands

HINTS:

Invite a local councillor or regional officer with responsibility for climate risks and air pollution to speak.

Include discussion on campaigning in a hostile political environment.

Activity 1 – The law and climate risks

Aims: To help you:

~ evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of current frameworks

Task

The concept of a **just transition** is built into the international climate framework. Use the worksheet in the pack and your notes from the presentation to assess its implementation in UK law on climate risks.

In groups identify any changes needed to the following legal provisions:

1. Climate Change Act 2008
2. 3rd and 4th National Adaptation Programmes
3. HASAWA and related regulations

None of the provisions above require employers to **explicitly** conduct climate risk assessments.

Do you think a change in the law is needed to make this a requirement?

Report back – Outline whether you think legal changes are needed, and how we can get trade union engagement in the process.

Activity 2 - Regional, local authority and employer policy and standards

Aims – To help you:

- Examine the range of climate risk policy drivers
- Assess how you can use these for your workplace / community

Task

Choose a group to join from the list below:

Regional level - Check the website of your regional / mayoral authority. Run a search on 'Climate Adaptation / Resilience'. Prepare a short report on what you have found. Include in your report whether there is a reference to engagement with trade unions

Local Authority level – Find your Local Authority using the Climate Emergency UK Scorecard 2025. [Council Climate Action Scorecards | Climate Emergency UK](#)

1. What percentage score did your authority achieve?
2. In the section on 'Collaboration and Engagement' did it score a point on Question 6.12 '*Does the council have an ongoing way for employee representative bodies (including recognised trade unions) to influence the development and delivery of the council's Climate Action Plan?*'

Employer level – Choose an employer that you either work for or that you have dealings with.

Check their website or use any current information to report on whether there is a climate risk / adaptation policy. Was there a consultation / negotiation process with the recognised trade unions?

Report back – Summarise your findings covering:

1. What is your overall assessment of the policy you looked at?
2. How do you plan to try and improve it?

Activity 3 - Union policy and campaign initiatives

Aims: To help you:

- evaluate the range of union resources available to negotiate on climate risks
- draw up an action plan (see below) to support negotiations on a climate risk

Task

Choose one of the following climate risks that impact or is likely to impact on your members in the future:

1. Workplace temperature
2. Extreme weather
3. Fire safety
4. Air quality
5. Vector borne illnesses

Fill in the worksheet below based on discussions in your group.

Report back

Appoint someone to summarise the main findings from the completed worksheet.

Creating an Action Plan

What is the Problem?

What do you need to investigate/what more information do you need? (include any references to local and international standards discussed so far on the course)

Plan your next steps

Sources of Information

International

[WHO, WMO issue new report and guidance to protect workers from increasing heat stress](#)

[Extreme Heat | United Nations](#)

[Convention concerning prevention and protection against biological hazards in the working environment](#)

[Recommendation R205 - Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 \(No. 205\)](#)

TUC and unions

[Year of Trade Union Climate Action TUC](#)

[Safety rules failing to tackle climate change risk to workers - Australian Council of Trade Unions](#)

Government

[CCC Letter: CCC letter to Minister Hardy - advice on the UK's adaptation objectives - Climate Change Committee](#)

[Climate Change Act 2008](#)

[Progress in adapting to climate change: 2025 report to Parliament - Climate Change Committee](#)

[UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022](#)

Regional

[The London Climate Resilience Review | London City Hall](#)

Local authority

[Council Climate Action Scorecards | Climate Emergency UK](#)

[Local Council Climate Report lays bare UK council progress – EnvironmentJournal](#)

Employer

[Taking climate action - Aviva plc](#)

Other

Greener Jobs Alliance [GJA-Guidance-doc.pdf](#)

Hazards [Climate- Hazards magazine](#)

[Who decides how we adapt to climate change? | Leah Aronowsky | The Guardian](#)

Green Alliance - [Adapt to thrive: preparing the UK for climate change » Green Alliance](#)

TUCAN - [Campaign-Briefing-Paper-Indoor-Air-Pollution.pdf](#)

Climate risks

1. Heat [Heat Strike](#)
2. Air quality [TUCAN - Greener Jobs Alliance](#)
[95% neighbourhoods' air quality unsafe despite air pollution drop | Friends of the Earth](#)
3. Fire safety [Climate Change and UK Wildfires](#)
4. Extreme weather [Met Office: Extreme weather the UK's new normal - BBC News](#)
5. Vector borne illnesses [HECC 2023 report. Chapter 8. Direct and indirect effects of climate change on vectors and vector-borne diseases in the UK](#)
6. Supply Chains [New edie Extra podcast: How businesses can make their supply chains more climate-resilient - edie](#)
7. **Motion 75 Year of trade union climate action 2025–2026 - Carried** motion received from: [BFAWU](#)

Congress welcomes the 2024 TUC motion recognising that the climate emergency is a trade union issue impacting all jobs and workers. Congress reaffirms its support for climate-related workplace action, including heat strikes, and the call for a year of trade union climate action 2025–2026, now also national policy for several affiliated unions.

Congress recognises:

- i. workers are already suffering from extreme weather, flooding, and unaffordable fossil fuel energy
- ii. the UK is unprepared for escalating climate disasters
- iii. a rapid, just global transition from fossil fuels is essential to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown.

Congress calls on the TUC and affiliates to:

a. support and organise a workplace day of action on 14 November 2025 and support protests on the global day of solidarity on 15 November 2025, during COP30 in Brazil.

Congress resolves to:

1. promote green bargaining in all union training, campaign for facility time for green reps, build national and regional green reps' networks
2. encourage unions to organise outreach events, including workplace discussions and joint actions with other unions and civil society on climate, housing, health, fuel poverty and anti-racism during 2025–2026
3. support global solidarity initiatives including the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and climate justice finance such as Brazil's proposed two per cent tax on billionaires
4. promote and support mobilisation around the workplace day of action on 14 November 2025 and global day of solidarity on 15 November 2025, during COP30 in Brazil
5. instruct the TUC Just Transition team to produce and coordinate publicity and promotion to support affiliates throughout the year.

Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union Amendment

AMENDMENT

In bullet 3., after “billionaires” insert:

“, while understanding that future fossil fuel production can only be ended when and where a fully funded workers' plan for jobs has been agreed and delivered in full”

Unite

8. 2025 TUC Trades Councils Conference - climate motion passed

M15 - Future proofing our workplaces and preparing for a year of climate and ecological action

Conference welcomes the motions passed at the TUC that declared

- "the climate emergency will affect all jobs and all workers adversely.

- Climate Change is “a key trade union issue for us all”
- for a year of TU climate action "including engagement with community and climate justice groups"
- calling for heat strikes.

Conference recognises that

- Workplaces are at risk from extreme weather, flooding and high fossil fuel energy bills
- The failure to address the existential threat of climate/ecological breakdown is contributing to the epidemic of mental ill health now afflicting young people and adults alike

This Trades Council believes that the UK should support and implement Brazil's proposal for a global 2% tax on all billionaires to fund the green transition for the Global South; and tax all billionaire income increases to raise the annual \$1.3 Trillion needed for it; and penalise banks that finance fossil fuel development.

And that workplaces and unions should

- develop workers ‘understanding of the realities of climate and ecological breakdown through webinars and Carbon Literacy Training
- be hubs for debate, and action to reduce workplace emissions and make all the workplace resilient to weather extremes, turning anxiety into purposeful action.

This Trades Council recognises the need to sharply increase union capacity to build the year of TU climate action, which should start in September 2025 with the Brazil COP as a key mobilising moment.

This Conference asks all Trades Councils to coordinate and organise networks and actions in their area during a year of Climate/Ecological Action including

- organise a Climate/Ecological Conference with other unions and climate campaigns during the year of action, as Leeds Trades Council did in 2019.
- work with other unions and climate campaigns to initiate and encourage members to support outward facing workplace events during the TU year of climate action, including a series of webinars and action on extreme weather
- organise a speaker on Heat strikes
- signpost green bargaining in all Reps training
- build networks of District Green officers and workplace health, safety and environment reps
- campaign for all workplaces to have a Green Bargaining Officer or to add Environment to the role of Health & Safety Representative.

Section 4

Further Activities and Resources

(To be used as stand-alone or incorporated in existing training)

Activity 1: Quick fire round: What are the issues?

Aim:

- To get as many issues out on the table as we can

Task

Write on the 'post it notes' any concerns or issues you have about climate change – one issue per post it note.

This could include statements made to you by managers or members, issues that have come up in the workplace; things you've read in the union journal.

Keep putting as many post notes as you like on the flip chart.

Report Back

Report your findings in your groups

Activity 2: Workplace Mapping

Aim:

- To identify workplace hazards caused by climate change including excessive temperatures.

Task:

Using a large poster paper, draw your workplace (which can be a single site, or could be a whole area for some workers, like delivery drivers).

Then, identify and mark those areas with hazards caused by, or made worse by climate change, including areas becoming too hot.

Use different coloured pens to highlight the areas where heat is a greater problem.

You should go back to work and try to do this with a group of your co-workers; to improve the map, and put more detail on it. You could arrange for thermometers to be placed in those areas where you suspect there are heat problems.

Report Back

Report your findings in your groups

Activity 3: Control measures: hierarchy of control

Aim

- To start to identify possible responses to workplace hazards
workplace hazards caused by climate change including excessive temperatures.

Task

Choose one hazard and look at the list of actions to tackle excessive heat at work.

Select some actions that would help to reduce the risk, and list them in the “hierarchy of control.

You can have more than one measure in each category

The hazard:	Control measure(s)	Notes
Eliminate the hazard		
Substitute the process/machinery with something that reduces the risk		
Use engineering controls		
Use PPE		

Activity 4 : The Hierarchy of Control

This drama explains three fundamental concepts in occupational safety and health.

HAZARD

RISK

HIERARCHY OF CONTROL

You need bottles of water, different kinds of gloves, like rubber glove, leather glove, buckets and towels. You need something like a plastic tray. You need a volunteer to come up. Pour a little water over their arm (keep bucket underneath.)

Explain that the bottle contains a hazardous chemical. It will attack the skin and cause blistering. It might even enter the bloodstream. Or a worker could breathe it in, and it would damage their lungs.

This is the HAZARD. Wherever you take the chemical it does the same thing. Take it to China, India, Vietnam, UK - the hazard is the same. You cannot change the Hazard.

What you can do is reduce the RISK (probability) of the chemical going on workers' arm? Or into their lungs, etc.

And you start at the top of the hierarchy of control.

1. Adopt a new method of working which eliminates the need for the chemical. EG if using pesticides, go for natural pest control methods.
2. Substitute the chemical with something less harmful that does the same thing. If you can, have different coloured bottle, or coloured water in bottle to show this. If the chemical is less toxic, then the risk to the worker is reduced. Act this out. Have another bottle. Pour the water from this bottle over the volunteer's arm. But explain that it is not as harmful.
3. Engineering controls: One way is to put a cap on the bottle, so chemical cannot escape and harm worker when they breathe the fumes. So, screw the cap onto the bottle. Shake the bottle over the volunteer's arm. Of course, no water should escape, so the hazard is completely eliminated.
4. Engineering controls: Another way is to guard the worker. You need somebody to hold the tray above the volunteer's arm, then you pour the water on the tray. The tray acts like a guard. Act this out. Ask people if

they could be a potential flaw to the system? The answer is possibly, if the worker can remove the guard. It must be maintained in its correct position at all times.

5. Administrative controls Another way is to reduce exposure by sharing. Get another person to stand up and put a little over each of the two people. So, each gets only half the dose. With pesticides, rotate the spraying job. In a steel mill, where high heat levels are dangerous, rotate the work, so instead of one worker doing an eight-hour shift, two workers do a four-hour shift in the extreme heat. The other four hours of their shift they can spend working somewhere else where the temperature is much lower.

6. PPE: Another way is for the worker to wear gloves. Ask them to put on a rubber glove. Explain that the chemical might be so strong, it quickly eats through glove to skin.

7. PPE: Or a better glove could be used - use the leather glove. Workers should be consulted on the PPE. Note that most masks given to workers are totally useless.

This is the hierarchy of control.

Act out each stage of this as much as you can.

Activity 5: Collective Bargaining Agreements

Aim

- To prepare for collective bargaining
- Identify key aspects of a climate change agreement

Task

Read through the examples of collective bargaining agreements, including the TUC model agreement and the examples from the USA.

Select those clauses which are most relevant to your workplace, and use these as the basis for a draft CBA

Report back

Report your findings back

Activity 6: Climate Change and the Risk Assessment Process

Aims:

Understanding how climate change must shape modern risk assessments

Task 1

Which risk assessments in your workplace should now include climate risks. Think about assessments such as Lone workers, Travel or driving for work. Write down 5 that apply to your workplace.

Task 2

How could climate risks be added into the organisation's stress risk assessment. Discuss how heat, poor air quality and extreme weather can disrupt normal working patterns by causing:

- fatigue
- increased customer pressure
- delays and staff shortages
- uncomfortable or unsafe workspace conditions
- anxiety or uncertainty

Write one example of how climate impacts could increase stress in your workplace.

Task 3

What action should the employer take next. As a group, agree on one control improvement you think your employer must make to keep the risk assessment "suitable and sufficient".

Examples could include:

- adding travel disruption to emergency plans
- adjusting workloads during heatwaves

Report back

Tutor Notes

This activity helps explore why climate change is not a new category of risk — it is an intensifier of risks that safety reps already deal with. Heat, cold, air quality, flooding, storms and infectious diseases are all issues covered by existing legal duties. Climate change simply increases their frequency, severity and unpredictability. To meet legal requirements, employers must now ensure their *existing* risk assessment systems take climate-related hazards into account.

Under HASAWA and MHSWR, employers must keep risk assessments *up to date* when circumstances change. Climate change means conditions are changing — so risk assessments must change too.

Activity 7 : Opening Up the Conversation – Climate Change and Union Action

Aim

To help participants explore the tension between protecting jobs and tackling climate change, and to start a constructive conversation about how unions can respond.

Task

Discuss the following *three* questions.

1. What's the dilemma?

Think about industries where union jobs currently depend on activities that increase emissions (e.g., transport, manufacturing, energy, logistics).

- Why do workers feel their jobs are at risk?
- Why do unions feel pressure to act on climate change at the same time?

2. How does this issue show up in your workplace or sector?

Discuss examples such as:

- New environmental policies that affect working practices
- Technology changes
- Pressures from employers or government
- Concerns expressed by members about job security

3. What would a *just transition approach* look like?

What could unions do to make sure climate action does not harm workers? Consider ideas like training, redeployment, negotiation, better planning, or “just transition” principles.

Report Back

Each group shares:

- One example of the tension between jobs and climate action
- One concern raised by workers
- One idea for how unions can open up the conversation and reduce conflict

Tutor Notes

This activity helps:

- Normalise the tension (it is real and common)
- Create space for members to express fears without judgement
- Shift the focus from “jobs vs climate” to “jobs in a safer climate-ready future”
- Encourage discussion of constructive union-led solutions rather than defensive reactions

Section 5

Additional Resources

1.

Controlling the Climate Risks - Hot Temperature Hazards example

Remove where possible

- Cancel, postpone, or relocate work during extreme heat alerts.
- Move tasks outdoors to shaded or cooler indoor areas where possible.
- Rearrange workloads so that heat-intensive tasks are *not required* during peak temperatures (usually 11 am–3 pm).
- Where heat-emitting equipment is unnecessary, switch it off or reschedule its operation.

Replace hot processes with cooler or safer alternatives

- Replace heat-producing equipment with lower-heat or insulated alternatives.
- Use mechanical aids instead of manual heavy labour that increases heat strain.
- Substitute uniforms/PPE for materials designed for better thermal comfort.

Make the workplace physically cooler or better ventilated

- Install or maintain fixed air-conditioning, or provide temporary AC units during heat waves.
- Provide portable, ceiling, or exhaust fans to improve airflow.
- Use evaporative coolers, shading structures, reflective blinds, or window films.
- Ensure windows can be safely opened or blinds kept down to reduce radiant heat.
- Create cool-down rooms or shaded recovery spaces.
- Improve insulation to reduce heat build-up inside buildings.

Change the way work is organised

- Schedule “hot work” for cooler parts of the day (early morning or late afternoon).
- Shorten work periods and increase the length and frequency of breaks.
- Implement flexible working to avoid hot travel periods and overcrowded commutes.
- Allow working from home where possible during extreme heat.
- Train first aiders and supervisors to recognise heat stress and respond quickly.
- Introduce emergency procedures for heat alerts, including “stop work” protocols.

- Plan ahead for rescheduling performances, shifts, tasks or rehearsals during heat waves.

Enable workers to adapt their actions safely

- Allow workers to reduce pace, vary tasks, or temporarily pause work.
- Allow removal or adjustment of uniforms, make-up, costumes or dress codes.
- Permit workers to self-regulate by accessing shade, water, and rest areas at any time.
- Encourage hydration and regular breaks to prevent fatigue and heat illness.
- Use reporting systems that allow workers to raise concerns early and where needed, step away from the job

PPE / Personal Measures

*(PPE does **not** reduce heat — in many cases, it increases it. Use only when higher-level controls are insufficient.)*

- Provide cooling PPE, such as cooling vests, breathable clothing, or lighter materials.
- Issue sunscreen, hats, sunglasses for outdoor workers.
- Review PPE to ensure it does not trap heat unnecessarily.
- Ensure workers know limitations — heat illness can still occur despite PPE.

Monitoring, Supervision and Support

Monitoring

- Track temperatures (indoors and outdoors) during shifts.
- Monitor heat-related incidents, sickness, complaints and near misses.
- Observe vulnerable workers more closely (pregnant workers, those with medical conditions, menopausal workers, etc.).

Supervision & Training

- Train staff to recognise early signs of heat stress and overheating.
- Make sure managers understand when work becomes unsafe and must stop.
- Ensure rapid escalation to first aid or emergency services when needed

2. Understanding the Hierarchy of Control using a Tiger (Risk reduction)

Use the Hierarchy of Control to deal with a Tiger!⁴

Another way of looking at the idea of the hierarchy of control is to consider the situation where five people are locked in a room with a tiger.

The hazard is that the tiger could eat the people.

How can the risk be reduced?

- The tiger could be placed into a cage
- The people could be placed into a cage
- The people could be issued with chain mail suits
- The tiger could be taken out of the room
- The people could be taken out of the room
- The tiger could be replaced with a domestic cat
- People could leave the room in turn
- People could be given a gun, or other weapon
- People could be given a spray that could temporarily make the tiger go to sleep

List controls in hierarchical order, starting with the most effective.

3. Collective Bargaining Agreements - These are from the USA, where CBAs are also known as “contracts”. Spelling is USA.⁵

Heat Illness Prevention

The Employer shall monitor environmental conditions as close to the individual worksite as possible, including a daily check of the US National Weather Service or use of the OSHA.gov or similar source of temperature data. The Employer shall:

1. Provide each building with an adequate amount of potable drinking water sufficient for the number of employees working on each shift.
2. Provide, on a one-time basis, to each regular package car driver a one-gallon durable insulated container, who has not received an insulated water jug from the Company.
3. Provide each building with an adequate number of ice machines sufficient for the number of employees working on each shift, which are maintained in good working order, clean, and in sanitary condition or have ice delivered and available.
4. Train employees to report heat-related symptoms and request emergency assistance.
5. Designate one or more employees in each building per shift, who are dedicated to heat-related injury and illness prevention and who are authorized to call for emergency medical services. Other employees shall be able to call for emergency services when no designated employee is available.
6. Provide a graduated workload to new Employees for purposes of acclimatization for the first five (5) to seven (7) working days and monitor for signs and symptoms of heat injury and illness.
7. Install additional (minimum of 18,000) fans to improve air circulation throughout the buildings during the 2023-2028 CBA.
8. Install additional (minimum of 2,500) water fountains throughout the buildings during the 2023- 2028 CBA.
9. Allow overhead doors to be opened, where security and weather conditions allow, to induce cross ventilation.
10. Monitor employees for heat-related illness and injury.
11. Communicate heat related injury and illness events during the pre-shift communication (PCM) meetings to review prevention steps.
12. Identify areas that can be used for shade or cool zones.
13. Employees shall be allowed to follow best practices as outlined in the employer’s heat stress training.

[National Masters United Parcel Service Agreement, 2023-2028](#)

Breaks, Hydration and Early Dismissal

The Company agrees that when the temperature and humidity in the plant reach a level that the comfort and health of the employees is in question, the Company will meet with the committee to discuss and attempt to agree on a course of action. Such action may include the extension of increase in the number of breaks, the providing of refreshments, and in extreme cases the opportunity for employees to leave work early.

[Canada Auto Workers Local 1986 and Crowe Foundry, Ltd , 2001-2004](#)

The Employer shall hourly monitor heat and humidity conditions in the Distribution Center... If the Heat Index exceeds 100 for more than one (1) hour then the distribution center will shut down and employees will be sent home under the Interruption of Operations 'Act of God' provisions of this agreement.

[International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 26 and Rite Aid, 2017](#)

When the official temperature reaches 95.0°F. (35.0°C.), the following procedure will Apply:

The official temperatures will be taken from two (2) thermometers in locations chosen by the Joint Health and Safety committee. Each existing break will be lengthened by ten (10) minutes until such time as the temperature reading is below 95.0°F. (35.0°C.).

UNITE Local 314 and Tiercon Industries, Inc. Plastics Division, 2003 – 2006

Should the temperature in an employee's work area exceed 38 degrees Celsius [100.4 F], using a Humidex Scale, with an appropriate method of measurement, an employee will be allowed additional rest periods or breaks. The Company will excuse an employee from work, under these conditions, because of heat sickness, in the same manner as any other employee who suffers an illness at work. The Company will continue to follow its current practice in this regard. At 45 degrees Celsius, department Supervisor, Company Health & safety and Union Co-chair shall determine appropriate level of action required.

⁵ These example clauses from CBAs in the USA are from the Labor Occupational Health Program, University of California, Berkeley https://lohp.berkeley.edu/collective-bargaining/bargaining-language-2/#Heat_Hazards

Unifor Local 1941 and Autoliv Canada, 2020 – 2023

The Employer shall provide at no cost to employees, electrolyte-based liquids throughout the workplace during the months of May, June, July, August, September and October and at other times as determined by a union-management hazard assessment. This includes time to consume liquids and rest, to prevent dehydration. In addition, the Employer agrees to provide and maintain air-conditioned break areas/rooms, cooling fans and local exhaust ventilation at points of high-heat production.

United Steel Workers model language, 2023

Heat Relief and Cool-Down Periods

A heat illness preventative cool-down recovery period of no less than five (5) minutes shall be made available for employees working in high heat conditions in order to prevent heat illness. Employees believing a preventative cool-down recovery period is needed to avoid heat illness or suffering from heat illness shall be provided access to an area with shade that is either open to the air or provided with ventilation or cooling. Such access to shade shall be permitted at all times. Cooling measures other than shade (e.g., use of misting machines) may be provided in lieu of shade if the Individual Employer can demonstrate that these measures are at least as effective as shade in allowing employees to cool. Employees should not discount any discomfort or symptoms they are experiencing. They should immediately report any problems they are experiencing to a supervisor and coworker. Employees must notify their supervisors immediately if they believe they require access to shade, or alternative cooling measures and/or a preventative recovery period. If an Individual Employer fails to provide an Employee a preventative cool-down recovery period in accordance with this Section, the Individual Employer shall pay the Employee one additional hour of pay at the Employee's regular rate of compensation, excluding fringe benefits, for each work day that a requested preventative recovery period is not provided. No employee shall be discriminated against for exercising his rights pursuant to this Section. Any dispute or grievance concerning meal, rest, and/or heat illness recovery periods shall first be processed under and in accordance with Article IX, Grievance Procedures.

[AGC/Pile Drivers, Divers, Carpenters, Bridge, Wharf And Dock Builders Local Union #34 and Associated General Contractors of California,2014-2019](#)

Heat Stress Training

By April 1 of each year: Several people, chosen by the union, from each shift will be trained to conduct heat stress monitoring.

[Unifor Local 4451 and Cooper Standard Automotive \(Canada\) Limited, Ontario, 2014](#)

Heat Prevention Labor-Management Committees

Within ten (10) days of ratification of this Agreement, an IBT/UPS Package Car Heat Committee will be created, consisting of three (3) individuals appointed by the Union and three (3) individuals appointed by the Employer, and shall meet to begin discussing appropriate methods for venting and insulating the package car cargo compartments. The Committee also shall identify potential venting and insulation solutions for evaluation and field testing, including, but not limited to, the installation of an insulation product on the floor of package car cargo compartments. By October 1, 2024, the Committee shall issue its determination as to an additional appropriate venting and/or insulation solution(s) to reduce the temperature in package car cargo compartments. Should the Committee be unable to agree by that date, the matter shall immediately be referred to the Union and Employer Chairs of the National Negotiating Committee for resolution.

[National Masters United Parcel Service Agreement, 2023-2028](#)

Article 18 — Safety and Health Equipment, Accidents and Reports:

Section 14 Package Cars (Air Conditioning): All vans, pushbacks, fuel trucks, package cars, shifting units, and 24-foot box vans after January 2024 shall be equipped with A/C. Single fans will be installed in all package cars within 30 days of ratification and a second fan will be installed no later than June 1, 2024.

Air-conditioned package cars will first be allocated to Zone 1, which is the hottest areas of the country. All model year 2023 and beyond package cars and vans will be delivered with factory-installed heat shields and air induction vents for the package compartment. Within 18 months of ratification, all package cars will be retrofitted with heat shields and air induction vents.

A Package Car Heat Committee will be established within 10 days of ratification for the purpose of studying methods of venting and insulating the package compartment. A decision must be made by October 2024 or the issue will be submitted to the grievance procedure. The company will replace at least 28,000 package cars and vans during the life of this contract.

Teamsters - UPS NATIONAL MASTER TENTATIVE AGREEMENT 2023-2028

<https://teamster.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/UPS-Master-Highlights-single-pgs-1.pdf>

4. Further Research

- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TemperatureGuide.pdf>
- <https://youtu.be/TIESWDLHluo>
- <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2821%2901208-3>
- <https://www.equity.org.uk/advice-and-support/health-and-safety/temperature#:~:text=Keep%20key%20parts%20of%20the,Organiser%20for%20support%20and%20advice>
- [The 2026 Europe report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: narrowing window for decisive health action - The Lancet Public Health](#)
- Hazards Magazine generally : <http://www.hazards.org/index.htm> - SUBSCRIBE
- <https://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/>
- TWITTER: @hazardscampaign @hazardsmagazine @hazardseitor @aew1aew1 @Jnewsham @centregreater
- FACEBOOK: We didn't vote to die at work - Hazards Campaign
- Greater Manchester Hazards Centre: <https://gmhazards.org.uk/>
- Hazards Campaign: <http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/>
- Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2025
https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/IRENA_SOC_RE_and_jobs_2026.pdf

5. Jargon sheet

During the course you might come across terms or words that are new or strange to you. It is useful to keep a jargon list so that everybody can check what different words, phrases or abbreviations mean. A large poster paper will be kept in the room while the course is in progress. If anybody, including the trainer, uses any word or phrase or abbreviation that you do not understand then please ask for it to be explained.

You can copy these explanations here.

Word, Phrase of abbreviation	Meaning

6. Information to be incorporated on the next update:

1. Draft UCU Motion – Climate Risks

This branch notes:

- 1. that workers face occupational health and safety hazards from climate impacts throughout the year.*
- 2. employers may declare climate emergencies, but they don't consult with employees about plans to address it.*
- 3. the need for a union climate adaptation strategy within the 2026 TUC year of climate action.*

We call upon the UCU to:

- 1. Raise the need for employers in all education sectors to conduct climate change risk assessments in conjunction with recognised unions. These assessments to include air pollution, working in hot temperatures, extreme weather, vector-borne diseases, homeworking, and other related impacts.*
 - 2. Work with the TUC to campaign for a change in health and safety law to make it a duty on employers to conduct climate risk assessments.*
 - 3. Provide climate risk training and information for union members and reps using the material developed by Hazards Campaign, TUCAN, and the Greener Jobs Alliance.*
- 2. The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC)** sets the broad terms and conditions for each federal public service agency e.g. tax office, benefits offices, border force etc. Each agency can negotiate with unions using this guidance framework. Unions of course can demand more/ improved interpretation, attracting and retaining talent can see the boundaries being pushed and the Fair Work Commission can alter or adjudicate on interpretations.

One of the provisions union campaigning helped achieve was emergency response leave for Aus Public Service (APS) volunteers. Most of these tend to be in response to climate related emergencies but not exclusively (note that it's not framed as climate related but often it is in reality).

Other forms of special or accumulated personal leave are also built into agreements - interpretations and application vary from agency to agency and at the discretion of the agency head but flooding and bush fires have seen an uptake in this leave. The APS tends to set a standard for other employers to follow (or ignore unless its recognised volunteer rural firefighters).

For more on emergency response leave see link below:

<https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/workplace-relations/guidance-agency-heads-paid-emergency-response-leave-aps-employees#legislative-framework-and-agency-action>

3. Spain: "Climate leave" to protect workers during extreme weather

[Spain's Council of Ministers](#) has approved a landmark policy granting workers the right to "climate leave," addressing the growing impact of extreme weather on labour conditions. The initiative, part of a broader response to the devastating Dana storm that claimed over 200 lives in Valencia, modifies the Workers' Statute to ensure safety during environmental crises.

Under the new regulation, workers may take up to four days of fully paid leave if extreme weather makes it impossible to travel to work. This period can be extended until conditions improve. After four days, companies may declare force majeure through temporary suspension measures (ERTE), with public support. The policy also obliges collective agreements to include action protocols for weather-related risks and allows workers' representatives to halt work during official alerts without penalties for workers. Employers must ensure safety by providing timely risk information and suspending activities when necessary.

This climate-focused reform marks the first of its kind in Spanish labour law, and the Labour Minister emphasised that no one should risk their life for work, highlighting the role of these measures in fostering workplace resilience against environmental hazards. The "climate leave" provision takes effect immediately. [The Secretary General of Comisiones Obreras \(CCOO\)](#), has expressed support for the new "climate leave" policy. He considers the measure "positive" and advocates for its inclusion in a broader State Pact to address the challenges of the climate crisis. Sordo emphasizes the importance of negotiating such measures within social dialogue frameworks to ensure legal certainty, as they regulate sensitive aspects of labour relations.

[Spain: "Climate leave" to protect workers during extreme weather | EPSU](#)

4. **Stirling Smith podcast – The stronger the union, the cooler the workplace** - ["The stronger the union, the cooler the workplace." Interview with union educator Stirling Smith](#)
5. **Urban Exchange Podcast – Flood and energy resilience in Quezon City** - [Smart Cities World - Urban Exchange Podcast - Urban Exchange Podcast Episode 32 – Flood and energy resilience in Quezon City](#)