



The Institutional Framework for the protection of workers against heat in Greece

Theoni Koukoulaki

Surveyor Engineer, Ergonomist, PhD, R&D Manager of ELINYAE

Panagiota Katsakiori

Mechanical Engineer, DEA, PhD, OSH Inspector Hellenic Labour Inspectorate

Law 3850/2010: Main OSH Law in Greece

Article 33, Space arrangement criteria and work stations, paragraph 2, Temperature:

"The workplaces as well as the auxiliary spaces in throughout the working hours must have temperature commensurate with the nature of the work and the physical effort required to perform it. Regarding jobs that are under the effect of high temperatures emitted by the facilities, the workplace must be cooled to a tolerable temperature as far as it is practically possible."

This Article does not focus on outdoor work. However, risk assessment must be exhaustive and include all occupational risks such as heat stress regardless of where it occurs. In addition, if required, measurements should be taken, special measures taken, medical monitoring, etc.





 Presidential Decree 305/1996: Minimum Requirements for Safety and Health Protection at Temporary or Mobile Construction Sites – Directive 92/57/EC

ANNEX IV, Part A, paragraph 7, Temperature:

"The temperature in the workplaces must meet the needs of human body during working time, taking into account the applied work methods, the physical effort exerted by workers and the climatic conditions of the seasons of the year."





Presidential Decree 70/1990: H & S of workers in shipbuilding activities

Article 67, paragraph 1i, Preventive Health Protection Examinations:

"Appropriate medical instructions must be given for workers at high temperatures."





 Presidential Decree 16/1996: Minimum Requirements for Safety and Health in the workplaces – Directive 89/654/EC

Article 2, Definition of workplace:

"The areas intended to include workplaces within the buildings of the business and/or facility, including any other part in the area of the business and/or facility where the worker has access in the context of his work."

Annex I, Chapter C, Article 10, paragraph 8, Temperature, 8.1:

"The workplaces must have a suitable temperature throughout the working hours with the nature of the work and the physical effort required to perform it, always taking into account the climatic conditions of the seasons of the year."





 Presidential Decree 16/1996: Minimum Requirements for Safety and Health in the workplaces – Directive 89/654/EC

Annex I, Chapter C, Article 10, paragraph 8, Temperature, 8.4:

"In the event of a heat wave, special measures are applied provided by the current provisions and circulars."

Annex I, Chapter C, Article 10, paragraph 23.5.a. Outdoor workplaces (special provisions):

"Workers must be protected from atmospheric influences..."





- At the beginning of each summer, a Circular for the prevention of workers from heat stress is issued.
- Its provisions are consultative.





- Obligations of Employers are included in the Circular, such as:
- Identification of tasks and workplaces where the risk of heat stress of workers is expected to increase
- Risk assessment
- Appropriate technical and organizational measures
- Organization of the appropriate infrastructure to deal with emergency situations and first aid provision
- Information and provision of instructions to employees
- Provision of workers with appropriate personal protective equipment

Businesses subject to collective agreements in force must comply with measures to protect workers from heat stress in accordance with any special conditions included therein



At the end of the Circular are attached:

Annex 1: includes an indicative and non-exhaustive list of technical and organizational measures to reduce heat stress and protect workers' health

Annex 2: the effects of heat strain on health are mentioned, as well as the categories of workers who are high-risk groups

Guide for the calculation of heat stress





Indicatively Annex 1 includes:

- A. Technical Measures to prevent heat stress
- 1. Interventions in the structural elements of buildings
- 2. Interventions in parts of the production process
- 3. Interventions in the microclimate of the workplace
- B. Organizational Measures to prevent heat stress
- C. Special provisions for outdoor works
- D. Personal Protective Equipment





Guide for the calculation of heat stress (WBGT)



WBGT tables are presented

Πίνακας 2. Όρια του δείκτη ΘΥΒΜΑΣ σύμφωνα με την ένταση της σωματικής

εργασίας.

Ένταση εργασίας	Κατώτερη τιμή ανάληψης δράσης (°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ)	Ανώτερη τιμή ανάληψης δράσης (°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ) 32.3°C		
Ήπια	30.8°C			
Μέτρια	28.2°C	31.3°C		
Υψηλή	27.6°C	30.5°C		
Πολύ υψηλή	27.9°C	29.8°C		

Πίνακας 3. Ένταση και μεταβολικός ρυθμός για διαφορετικές δραστηριότητες και εργασίες.

Ένταση εργασίας	Μεταβολικός ρυθμός (W)	Παραδείγματα δραστηριοτήτων	Παραδείγματα εργασιών	
Ήπια	180	Καθιστή θέση, όρθια θέση, ήπια εργασία με τα πόδια/χέρια και περιστασιακό περπάτημα	Εργασίες γραφείου με κάποια δραστηριότητα, υγειονομικό προσωπικό	
Μέτρια	300	Τυπικό περπάτημα, τυπική ανύψωση αντικειμένων	Εργασίες ήπιας έντασης σε εργοστάσιο καταστήματα λιανικής πώλησης και εστίασης, εργασία σε κήπο	
Υψηλή 415		Χειρισμός βαρέων αντικειμένων/ υλικών, γρήγορο περπάτημα	Εργασίες σε κατασκευές και γεωργία, σωματική εργασία σε αποθήκη	
Τολύ υψηλή	520	Σκάψιμο και φτυάρισμα	Ανθρακωρυχεία, συντήρηση δρόμων, επίπονες εργασίες σε κατασκευές και γεωργία	

Πίνακας 4. Συνυπολογισμός ατομικών μέσων προστασίας για τον καθορισμό των ορίων ΘΥΒΜΑΣ

ΡΟΥΧΙΣΜΟΣ	ΜΕΙΩΣΗ ΤΩΝ ΟΡΙΩΝ ΑΣΦΑΛΕΙΑΣ	
Τυπικός ρουχισμός εργασίας ενός επιπέδου από υφάσματα που έχουν υφευθεί Ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας από υφάσματα με επεξεργασμένο βαμβάκι που έχουν υφανθεί Ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας ενός επιπέδου με υφάσματα από πολυπροπυλένιο που δεν έχουν υφανθεί (π.χ., κατασκευασμένος με την τεχνολογία spunbond meltblown spunbond)	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά ο°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ.	
Ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας από πολυαιθυλένιο ενός επιπέδου χωρίς ύφανση	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά 2°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ	
Ρουχισμός εργασίας δύο επιπέδων από υφάσματα που έχουν υφανθεί (π.χ., ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας πάνω από ρούχα εργασίας)	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά 3°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ.	
Ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας και επιπλέον μακριά ποδιά προστασίας από ατμούς και χημικά με μακριά μανίκια	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά 4°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ.	
Ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας ενός επιπέδου χωρίς κουκούλα με προστασία από ατμούς και χημικά	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά 10°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ.	
Ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας ενός επιπέδου με κουκούλα με προστασία από ατμούς και χημικά	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά 11°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ	
Ρουχισμός εργασίας δύο επιπέδων με ολόσωμη φόρμα εργασίας χωρίς κουκούλα με προστασία από ατμούς και χημικά πάνω από ρούχα εργασίας	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά 12°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ.	
Ρουχισμός εργασίας που περιλαμβάνει κάλυμμα κεφαλής από οποιοδήποτε ύφασμα	Μείωση των ορίων ασφαλείας κατά 1°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ επιπλέον της αφαίρεσης που αναφέρεται παραπάνω για τον κάθε ρουχισμό εργασίας.	

Πίνακας 5. Συνυπολογισμός του εγκλιματισμού για τον καθορισμό των ορίων ΘΥΒΜΑΣ

Επίπεδο εγκλιματισμού	Ανώτερη και κατώτερη τιμή ορίου ΘΥΒΜΑΣ
ημέρες έχουν εκτελέσει 12 ή περισσότερες	Μείωση της ανώτερης και κατώτερης τιμής για ανάληψη δράσης κατά 0°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ
	Μείωση της ανώτερης και κατώτερης τιμής για ανάληψη δράσης κατά 2.5°C ΘΥΒΜΑΣ



WBGT Index

Πίνακας 8. Χρόνος εργασίας και διαλείμματα προκειμένου να μειωθεί ο κίνδυνος εργασιακής θερμικής καταπόνησης σύμφωνα με την κατώτερη τιμή για ανάληψη δράσης του δείκτη ΘΥΒΜΑΣ (°C).

Χρόνος ανά 60 λεπτά εργασιακής βάρδιας		Βαθμοί ΘΥΒΜΑΣ (°C) πάνω από την κατώτερη τιμή για ανάληψη δράσης με βάση την ένταση της εργασίας			
Εργασία (λεπτά)	Διάλειμμα (λεπτά)	Ήπια ένταση	Μέτρια ένταση	Υψηλή ένταση	Πολύ υψηλή ένταση
έως 60	έως 0	0	0	*	*
" 45	τουλάχιστον 15	0.4	0.8	0	*
" 30	" 30	1.0	1.9	1.2	0
" 15	" 45	1.5	3.1	2.9	1.9
Πλήρης διακοπή εργασίας		>1.5	>3.1	>2.9	>1.9

^{* :} δεν παρέχονται τιμές ΘΥΒΜΑΣ για αδιάκοπη ή σχεδόν αδιάκοπη εργασία υψηλής και πολύ υψηλής έντασης. Σε αυτές τις περιπτώσεις απαιτείται ακριβής εκτίμηση της θερμικής καταπόνησης με μετρήσεις θερμοκρασίας πυρήνα σώματος σε εργαζομένους κατά τη διάρκεια της εργασίας τους.

Hellenic OSH legislation for heatwaves

In 2023, during "KLEON" heat wave, a Ministerial Decision was issued according to which:

"Heat stress was considered high when WBGT bioclimatic index value was higher than 32.2 or the temperature was set to a value above 42°C and at the same time the value of the humidity index formed at least 14%, or the temperature was set to a value above 40°C and at the same time the value of the humidity index formed at least 20%."

In the above cases, it was mandatory to stop work from 12:00-17:00 in outdoor activities such as construction sites, distribution and transport of products by two-wheeled vehicles (delivery activities).

For shipbuilding activities, the obligation to stop works applied to temperature formed at a value above 38°C.



Hellenic OSH legislation for heatwaves

- For non-compliance of Employers with the Ministerial Decision, there was a fine of 2000 euros per employee who was found to work during inspections of OSH Inspectors from the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate.
- For the inspections (proactive and reactive), OSH Inspectors used the smartphone application developed by FAME Lab in the University of Thessaly to calculate Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) and Employers were also advised to use it.
- Based on relevant research WBGT has proved to be an efficacious thermal stress indicator in order to apply quick, large-scale assessment.





Hellenic OSH legislation for heatwaves

- Following the Ministerial Decision for the compulsory suspension of works during "KLEON" heatwave, an explanatory Circular was provided according to which the compulsory suspension of works did not apply in case of work in economic activities concerning important and critical infrastructures in the health, transport and public utility sectors (sanitary units, water supply, electricity, air transport, handling, sea, land and rail transport).
- Especially for the peak day of "KLEON" heatwave, on July 26th 2023, cessation of works was issued for delivery operations, including digital platform workers in the specific sector.





Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining

Two collective agreements include provisions for heat stress in:

- ship repair and
- delivery sectors
- The one in ship repair gives concrete organizational measures for different temperatures. It clearly dictates termination of work after 13.00 pm. The collective agreement in the delivery sector prohibits working outdoors during heatwave.
- Both agreements are above the provisions of the relevant circular on heat wave.





Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining

- There used to be a collective agreement also in the construction sector which included a provision on protection from heat stress. However, the current "collective agreement on the remuneration and working conditions of the Construction Craftsmen and Related Professions throughout the country" does not include at all OSH issues.
- One reason behind the lack of sectoral collective agreements can be that in the period 2010-2018 in Greece, as in the other Member States that apply economic adjustment programs (memorandum), there was a deregulation of collective bargaining.





Current situation in Greece

- Government Initiatives: General Legislation and Circular, Targeted Inspection programs from the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate
- Active Collaboration of the Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Security with the stakeholders (workers' and employers' organisations), the Hellenic National Meteorological Service and the Environmental Physiology Fame Lab of the University of Thessaly.





Thank you for your attention!



