

No. 182/26

23rd June 2026

Dear Colleague,

Red & Amber Alert

The Met Office has declared a red alert for parts of the Midlands, Southern England and South Wales.

The Met Office temperature for each location fluctuates during the day, getting hotter in the late afternoon on Wednesday and in the early afternoon on Thursday. We have been in discussions with Royal Mail and have agreed on the following Joint Statement, which should apply to all units and functions within the red and amber alert periods. Also attached is a copy of the RM SHE Alert which has been issued.

Underpinning this Joint Statement is the shared objective of keeping employees safe during the hottest periods of the day. This Joint Statement also provides a list of options which units can adopt to avoid delivering during this period.

We know that many units have already agreed on a plan to address the red and amber alerts. However, the aim is to ensure that all units have an agreed safe way of working over the next few days. We have also agreed on an escalation process for units without a safe plan in place. The escalation should be raised directly to Divisional Reps and RODs in the first place, and in other functions of the business to the relevant senior manager and senior field official, if they cannot resolve it, then to the signatories of the Joint Statement.

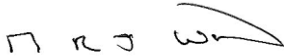
Finally, whilst we believe the Joint Statement will help mitigate our members working in the extreme heat of the day, we nevertheless want to remind all employees of the following:

Colleagues are reminded that workers are protected under Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, allowing them to remove themselves from situations where they reasonably believe there is a serious and imminent danger. This protection is limited to specific immediate risks to safety; however, it does not apply to general discomfort. If prevailing circumstances do represent a real risk of “serious and imminent danger”, colleagues should aim to seek immediate advice from their local CWU representatives before using rights under Section 44 and speak urgently to their line manager/employer. Protection under Section 44 is an **individual choice**, not a collective one, although representations can be made for whole groups of workers where higher UK temperatures and specific hot-weather risks are more prevalent.

Please can Branches give this LTB and the Joint Statement the widest possible circulation.

Any enquiries relating to the content of this LTB should be referred to the Deputy General Secretary (Postal) department hford@cwu.org , Outdoor Postal Dept pharacz@cwu.org or Processing, Distribution, Parcelforce, International & Quadrant Dept jrodrigues@cwu.org .

Yours sincerely,



Martin Walsh
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)



Tony Bouch
Assistant Secretary



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary

Royal Mail and Communication Workers Union (CWU) have been in discussions on the implementation of the Severe Weather Risk Assessment process generated by the Red and Amber heat warnings currently in place across the UK, to keep all colleagues safe.

We recognise that extreme heat presents real and varying risks to health, safety and wellbeing. These risks can affect individuals differently depending on their role, environment and personal circumstances. For this reason, it is essential that everyone follows the agreed guidance and controls.

A **SHE Alert**, has been shared with all operations managers to ensure **all units impacted by weather warnings complete a Severe Weather Risk Assessment**, in consultation with the local CWU Safety Representative or Area Safety Representative (ASR). The alert also outlines the key actions required to manage severe heat.

Both parties have agreed that all units will need to review their operational plans and consider what adjustments can be made to:

- Start and finish times
- Offer additional breaks, with workload adjustments to support their use
- Duties
- Workloads
- Weights being handled
- The suspension of door to door during the days of severe heat, to try to reduce weight in the bags
- The deployment of normal operational contingency arrangements and prioritisation
- Prioritise the use of air-conditioned vehicles to perform duties including for DPR duties and collection duties
- Indoors: Increase airflow (e.g. open windows/doors, use air conditioning or fans) and apply adjustments where thermal comfort cannot be maintained. (Bay / dock doors should not be opened, creating a risk of falling/interaction with vehicles).

The above list is not exhaustive and Local COMs and CWU Reps will need to manage local factors dynamically throughout this week, in accordance with Met Office guidance for the local area to avoid risks to individuals during the hottest parts of the day, as the week progresses to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all colleagues.

Where offices are unable to agree a safe operational plan and complete the Severe Weather Risk Assessment, this should be escalated to the Regional Operations Directors (or functional equivalents) and CWU Divisional Reps or field official for resolution.

Jamie Stephenson
Chief Operating Officer

Ricky McAulay
UK Operations Director

Martin Walsh
Deputy General
Secretary, CWU

Tony Bouch
Outdoor Assistant
Secretary, CWU



SHE Alert

Ref:	FY26 007 Severe Weather – Extreme Heat	Date of Issue:	23.06.2026	Author	Elizabeth Lloyd, Ricky McAuley & Jamie Stephenson
Priority to Communicate:	Immediate	Signatures Required (Yes/No)	No		
SHE Alert Delivery by;	Managers				

Audience:	All employees: Delivery, Collections, Distribution, Processing, Parcelforce, All other functions
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Overview	Red and Amber weather warnings forecast for extreme heat.
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Issue

Red and Amber heat weather warnings are currently in place across the UK. To keep people safe, we are sharing this alert to support a consistent and transparent approach to risk assessment and management. This alert outlines the key actions required to manage severe heat and is based on the Severe Weather Manager Assessment.

All units impacted by weather warnings must complete a Severe Weather Manager Assessment, this is undertaken in consultation with the local Communication Workers Union (CWU) Safety Representative or Area Safety Representative (ASR) where available.

The approach is grounded in managing risk rather than temperature alone. Controls, including cessation of certain activities, will be applied where the assessment indicates this is necessary.

In completing the Severe Weather Manager Assessment document, managers should:

- Assess the impact on different employee groups, giving particular consideration to colleagues who may be more vulnerable to the effects of extreme heat.
- Apply controls that are proportionate to the level of risk identified and the operational activities being undertaken.
- Consider the specific operating environment, including local temperatures, humidity, exposure to direct sunlight, availability of shade, ventilation and duration of exposure.
- Consider what adjustments can be made to duties, workloads, weights being handled, work locations, start and finish times, or work methods to reduce exposure whilst maintaining safe operations. The need for adjustments increases with temperature and length of exposure. This could also include controlling and considering wave 2 arrivals and/ or normal operational contingency arrangements and prioritisation to enable an earlier departure.
- Consider suspension of door to door.
- Additional breaks should be considered (indoors or outdoors), with workload adjustments to support their use.
- Indoors, increase airflow (e.g. open windows/doors, use air conditioning or fans) and apply adjustments where thermal comfort cannot be maintained. (Bay / dock doors should not be opened, creating a risk of falling/interaction with vehicles).
- Affected indoor higher-risk tasks that may increase heat exposure or cause thermal discomfort, e.g. work in restricted spaces or hot works should be reviewed and adjusted where required.
- Recognise that weather conditions will change throughout the day and review controls as temperatures and operating conditions change.
- Record and communicate any significant decisions made through the assessment process, including the rationale for controls applied.
- Ensure employees are briefed on the controls in place and empowered to undertake dynamic risk assessment where local conditions change.

The purpose of the assessment is to ensure risks arising from heat are managed appropriately based on local conditions. Controls should be proportionate to the risk identified and reviewed throughout the period of severe weather.

Where operationally practical, consider changing attendance times to reduce work in the peak of the day when

temperatures will be at their highest point. This needs to be considered on an activity basis with operational impacts on last mile delivery managed in line with the current contingency process.

As an employee it is your duty to follow the advice shared from the Severe Weather Manager Assessments on controls put in place and follow the stay safe in heat communications such as;

- Make your manager aware of any health conditions that may specifically impact your health and wellbeing in heat.
- If you feel unwell during your duty: stop, seek first aid support and report it to your manager.
- Keep hydrated throughout the day.
- Cover Up - Wear long, loose clothing to keep the sun off your skin. Your uniform is made from a special fabric to protect against ultraviolet radiation.
- Protect your head - Don't forget your head, face, ears and neck. Wear the wide brim hat that's part of your uniform – it's specially treated to protect against the sun. Remember to use sunglasses with UV protection.
- Take breaks in the shade - Come out of the sun when you have the chance, especially during the most powerful ultraviolet periods.
- Use sun cream - SPF 30 or higher on any exposed skin; apply it half an hour before going outside, put plenty on and reapply it frequently.
- Be skin safe - Report mole changes (size, shape, colour, itching or bleeding) or any other concerns about your skin to your doctor as soon as possible don't put it off, early treatment is important. If you have any medical condition that can be exacerbated by heat, please make your manager aware.
- Undertake continuous dynamic risk assessment while working in heat, monitoring your own condition and the environment and report to your manager immediately if you feel unwell or conditions change and become unsafe.
- Engage in local assessments and follow additional temporary control guidance.

It is important to note that in some instances of Severe Weather (Red warnings) (e.g. high winds) we have seen the blanket sweeping of controls such as, pausing the operation based on public guidance. In Severe weather in relation to heat, this can impact people in different ways, which is why risk assessments are locally based using national guidance as we need to consider conditions locally and the impact of the heat condition on people and infrastructure.

Learning / Action Points – What do we need to do now

- Brief the Alert to all employees, and agency staff.
- Please click here to access the applicable [Severe Weather Manager Assessment](#).
- Click here to access the [Severe Weather guidance](#).