

No. 218/26

4 August 2026

Royal Mail Group – Sun Safety Communications 2026

Dear Colleagues,

This week, Royal Mail Group have made available two new workplace-based posters on Sun Safety for issuing across Royal Mail and Parcelforce as we continue to face hotter and more extreme heat conditions during this summer period.

These posters are designed to offer short and practical advice in terms of *'things you can do to cool someone down'* and also highlight symptoms and early warning signs linked to possible Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke.

Additionally, RMG will be seeking to further highlight the *'staying hydrated'* Sun Safety message by promoting the 'Refill Return App' via PDAs. This Refill Return App connects users to places like cafes, restaurants and shops, etc., that offer free refills of water.

A copy of these two new workplace-based posters, alongside a screenshot of the Refill Return App are attached.

In setting out the above, it is useful to repeat the core Sun Safety messages of:

- **Cover Up** – The most effective barrier.
- **Protect your head** – Wear a wide brimmed hat.
- **Use sunscreen** – Factor 30 or higher and reapply.
- **Seek shade** – Take breaks in the shade.
- **Stay hydrated** – Drink regularly and avoid caffeine.
- **Skin safe** – Check for any changes.

The final attachments are the CWU posters 'Heat Guidance – Medication', which highlights that individual members who take medication can be at increased risk of heat-related illness, and the 'Heat Illness Guide', which explains how heat illness can happen.

Area Safety Reps (ASRs) and Workplace Safety Reps Actions:

Area and Workplace Safety Representatives are reminded to:

- Work with Operational Managers and SHE Team Management to raise awareness about Sun Safety amongst all members who work outdoors across Royal Mail Group.

- Ensure that Sun Safety posters are displayed in the workplace.
- Ensure that the RMG Severe Weather Guidance is followed and that SWMAs (Severe Weather Managers Assessments) are carried out as necessary and against MET Office Warnings and UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency) Alerts.
- Ensure that individuals who may be at increased risk in extreme heat due to age, underlying health conditions, who take certain medications, and new or expectant mothers are aware that new or further duty adjustments may be needed to support them in the event of a UKHSA 'Yellow Heat Alert' (and/or higher Alerts and MET Office Heat Warnings). These duty adjustments need to be made with the individual's agreement and recorded on the Health Passport and relevant Risk Assessment Form.

Where Branches and Safety Reps require any additional information on the above, or for any other enquiries in relation to this LTB, these should be referred to the DGS(P) Department, email: ACorbett@cwu.org or HFord@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Walsh

Deputy General Secretary (Postal)

Severe weather: extreme heat

Heat exhaustion

Does not usually need emergency medical help if you can cool down within 30 minutes:

- stop
- drink plenty of fluids
- cool down

Symptoms:



Tiredness and dizziness



Headache



Excessive sweating



Cramps in arms, legs and stomach



High temperature



Very thirsty



Feeling irritable /sick

Heat stroke

It is a medical emergency. Get immediate medical help if someone has the symptoms of heatstroke.

Symptoms:



Very high temperature



Hot skin without sweating



Fast breathing and a fast heartbeat



Confusion and restlessness



Seizure (fit)



Loss of consciousness

Things you can do to cool someone down

If someone has heat exhaustion, follow these 4 steps:



1. Move them to a cool place



2. Remove all unnecessary clothing

Take off items like a jacket or socks.



3. Give them plenty of water to drink

You can also give them an isotonic sports drink or oral rehydration powder that you mix with water, which will help replace salt lost through sweating.



4. Cool their skin

Spray/ sponge them with cool water and fan them. Cold packs, wrapped in a cloth and put under the armpits or on the neck are good too. Stay with them until they're better. They should start to cool down and feel better within 30 minutes.

DID YOU KNOW?



Medications can increase your risk of heat-related illness.

CERTAIN MEDICATIONS CAN INCREASE YOUR RISK OF HEATSTROKE, DEHYDRATION, AND SUNBURN BY IMPAIRING YOUR BODY'S ABILITY TO SWEAT, REGULATE INTERNAL TEMPERATURE, OR RETAIN FLUIDS. HEAT CAN ALSO PHYSICALLY DEGRADE THE ACTIVE INGREDIENTS IN DRUGS, RENDERING THEM LESS EFFECTIVE.

FOR CWU MEMBERS

HEAT ILLNESS GUIDE

COMMON MEDICATIONS AND DRUG CLASSES AFFECTED BY HEAT WAVES INCLUDE:

BLOOD PRESSURE & HEART MEDICATIONS

Diuretics (like furosemide or hydrochlorothiazide) cause fluid loss, accelerating dehydration and electrolyte imbalances.

Beta-blockers (like metoprolol or atenolol) slow your heart rate and limit blood flow to the skin, which prevents your body from properly releasing heat.

ACE Inhibitors (like ramipril or lisinopril) can dull your natural thirst response.

ALLERGY & SLEEP MEDICATIONS:

Antihistamines (like diphenhydramine and cetirizine) can block the chemical signals required by sweat glands.

ADHD STIMULANTS

Drugs like methylphenidate boost your metabolic rate, pushing your body temperature higher and putting extra strain on cooling mechanisms.

ANTIDEPRESSANTS & ANTIPSYCHOTICS

SSRI medications (Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) such as Citalopram, Sertraline and **SNRIs** (serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors) such as Duloxetine & Venlafaxine Can interfere with the hypothalamus (the brain's thermostat) and can impair sweating, significantly limiting the body's ability to cool itself.

DIABETES & WEIGHT LOSS MEDICATIONS

GLP-1s (popular for diabetes and weight management) can suppress thirst, contributing to severe dehydration.

TEMPERATURE-SENSITIVE DRUGS

Insulin, inhalers, and EpiPens break down rapidly when left in direct sunlight or warm environments (like cars or hot rooms), causing them to malfunction.

SCAN FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE & OFFICIAL ADVICE:



GOV.UK
MHRA
Heatwave
Advice



NHS –
Medicines
A to Z

If you have a long-term health condition you will likely be covered by the 2010 Equality Act. Any type of vulnerable person individual risk assessment should ask you – What **specific medications** are you taking?

Speak to your Union Health & Safety Representative about your reasonable adjustment needs.

MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS CAN PUT YOU AT RISK.

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✂ @ CWUNews

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HEAT ILLNESS GUIDE

FOR CWU MEMBERS

KEY FACT: HEAT ILLNESS HAPPENS IN THE UK AS WELL AS IN WARM CLIMATES.

Heat illness or heat related injury can cause a lot of damage and in some cases heat illness can be fatal.

DEFINITION OF HEAT ILLNESS

Heat Illness refers to a spectrum of disorders caused by environmental conditions whereby individuals become quickly unwell because of a rise in core body temperature.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

- 1 Heat illness happens when a body gains more heat than it loses.
- 2 Our body temperature rises when working or exercising or undertaking any manual activity during any increase in air temperature, or when in direct sunshine or when heat amplification occurs by reflecting off buildings and other surfaces. Heat amplification can often occur in vehicles too.
- 3 Heat is normally lost mainly by sweating. Usually, this helps the body to cool down and continue to function efficiently. In humid conditions, sweating doesn't work as well, and if too many clothes (or the wrong sort of clothes) are worn the body may keep in more heat than it should.
- 4 If more heat is gained than lost, our body temperature rises too much, which may lead to heat illness. HEAT STORAGE = HEAT GAINED – HEAT LOST
- 5 Risk Factors – You are at greater risk of heat illness if you are: • Tired • Hungry • Thirsty (dehydrated) • Or if identified as a vulnerable person due to another health condition.
- 6 An individual should be presumed to have heat illness if they experience or display any of the following: • Agitation • Nausea or vomiting • Cramps • Dizziness.
- 7 Worsening signs of heat illness include staggering, loss of coordination, collapse, loss of consciousness.
- 8 Where heat illness signs exist, STOP activity and seek medical assistance.

RISK BEHAVIOURS TO AVOID

DO NOT ignore any warning signs, if you or someone else you know or are working with start to display early signs of heat injury or heat illness you can call 111 to seek immediate guidance and advice or immediately call 999 if urgent First Aid is required.

DO NOT restrict water intake, even if you have limited access to toilet facilities you should still drink enough water to stay hydrated and return to work to use the toilet as required. Dehydration can be mild, moderate or severe depending on how much water your body is lacking, an early symptom to look out for is thirst.

DO NOT directly seek the sun, this is dangerous especially during physical work activity, seeking shade wherever possible can reduce how hot a person feels by more than 10°C

FURTHER GUIDANCE CAN BE FOUND BY SCANNING THE QR CODES BELOW:

X @DaveWardGS f The Communications Union

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NHS



World Health Organization

