

From: [Official HR Information](#)
Cc: [Human Resources](#)
Subject: Excessive Heat & Poor Air Quality Guidance
Date: Wednesday, July 5, 2023 4:07:02 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



Dear Colleagues,

As we navigate through this beautiful time of the year, we want to emphasize the importance of supporting our staff's needs during extreme heat and poor air quality. We encourage all supervisors of staff to be thoughtful and creative in finding additional ways to support their teams. Consider the diverse needs of staff colleagues who bike, walk, or take transit to work and explore options to accommodate their circumstances wherever practical. We recognize that individual comfort levels with heat can vary due to factors such as acclimatization, health conditions, medications, limited air movement, and hydration levels, among others.

To address this issue, we would like to offer the following guidelines rather than implementing a blanket policy:

- **Remote Work Options:** If your department, division, or college location does not have air conditioning, we encourage you to consider allowing more flexibility for remote work when temperatures are high. This approach prioritizes the health and well-being of our staff and helps prevent heat-related illnesses. Furthermore, research has shown that productivity tends to decline when temperatures reach the high 70s. By enabling remote work, we can ensure the comfort of employees while maintaining productivity. Furthermore, if being physically onsite is a necessity, it may be worth exploring the possibility of utilizing cooler workspaces in areas like the Student Center or Lemieux Library if the work can be conducted in an open space.
- **Additional Breaks, Fluid Intake and Masks for Voluntary Use:** We would like to request special consideration for our hardworking colleagues who cannot work from home, such as the Facilities and DPS teams. Please consider providing them with additional break time for brief periods to allow for heat relief and fluid intake, in addition to their regular breaks and lunches. Additionally, Supervisors, please work with your staff to ensure that those who are working outdoors have access to masks available for voluntary use with an AQI of 151-200.

We also encourage all supervisors of staff to consider organizing fun events such as weekly ice cream socials or other activities that can provide a refreshing and enjoyable break for employees. These events not only help alleviate the impact of extreme heat but also foster engagement, productivity, and morale among the team.

Below are some suggestions for ways to stay cool in your workspace:

[5 Ways to Stay Cool in the Office This Summer - Allé Designs \(alleofficesolutions.com\)](https://alleofficesolutions.com)

In the context of health and safety, we acknowledge that it is our top concern. However, we also recognize the importance of engagement, productivity, and morale. If these aspects are significantly impacted, leaders should collaborate with staff colleagues to find appropriate solutions and make necessary adjustments.

We encourage staff colleagues to speak up and discuss their needs with their supervisors just as we ask supervisors to be flexible and thoughtful when considering alternatives. It is essential to have open communication and for employees to share alternative suggestions for cooler workspace options. Your input and feedback are valuable, and supervisors should be receptive to exploring viable solutions together.

Remember, your well-being is our priority, and we are here to support you during this time. If you have any concerns, suggestions, or questions, please reach out to Ellen Huelmann, Workforce and Labor Relations Director, at ehuelmann@seattleu.edu. We are committed to working with you to create a comfortable and productive work environment.

Thank you for your dedication and cooperation in making our workplace safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Sincerely,

Jerron Lowe, J.D.

Vice President for Human Resources

SU People and Culture Strategies

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901 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122-1090