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01 Feb 2024	28 Feb 2026	SHEQ Warehouse (Pty) Ltd	Neville
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Environmental Regulations For Workplaces, 1987

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1. Definitions

Key definitions include:

- "acclimatised" - physiologically adapted to a particular thermal environment and work rate
- "attenuation" - proven capability of hearing protectors to reduce noise exposure
- "building work" - work defined in General Administrative Regulations
- "dB (A)" - unit of measurement of sound pressure level
- "directional luminaire" - luminaire with light radiation confined to a narrow beam
- "equivalent sound pressure level" - value of equivalent continuous sound level
- "exposed" - exposed whilst at work
- "exposure limit" - value defined in the Asbestos Regulations, 1987
- "hearing protectors" - approved ear muffs or ear plugs
- "heat stroke" - pathological condition from thermoregulatory failure
- "illuminance" - intensity of light falling on a surface, measured in lux
- "luminaire" - light fitting that supports a lamp with electrical connections
- "noise zone" - area where equivalent noise level equals/exceeds 85 dB (A)
- "regional director" - as defined in General Administrative Regulations
- "respiratory protective equipment" - device defined in Asbestos Regulations, 1987
- "time-weighted average" - average of measurements taken over a period
- "WBGT index" - number characterizing thermal conditions in the environment
- "working plane" - horizontal plane at the level where work is performed

2. Thermal requirements



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(1) No employee shall work in environment with time-weighted average dry-bulb temperature below 6°C without protective measures; for outdoor work, this applies at any time temperature is below 6°C.

(2) For refrigerated environments below 0°C: (a) Maximum exposure periods must follow prescribed limits:

- 0° to -18°: No limit
- Lower than -18° but not lower than -34°: Maximum 50 minutes continuous per hour
- Lower than -34° but not lower than -57°: Two 30-minute periods, 4 hours apart, 1 hour total per day
- Lower than -57°: Maximum 5 minutes during any 8-hour period

(b) Protective clothing must be provided including:

- Nylon freezer suit (double layer below -34°C)
- Woolen balaclava
- Fur-lined leather gloves
- Waterproof outer gloves with woolen inners for wet/thawing substances
- Woolen socks
- Waterproof industrial boots

(c) Employees must be certified fit to work in such environments (d) All clothing must be dry before entering low-temperature areas

(3) For vibrating hand-held tools below 6°C, lined gloves must be provided and worn.

(4) Where WBGT index exceeds 30: (a) Reduce index below 30 if practicable, or (b) For hard manual labor: (i) Ensure fitness certification (ii) Ensure acclimatization (iii) Inform employees to drink at least 600ml water hourly (iv) Train on heatstroke precautions (v) Provide prompt first-aid capabilities

3. Lighting

(1) Workplaces must be lit according to illuminance values in the Schedule, with specialized lighting provided when necessary.

(2) The chief inspector may modify the Schedule as needed.

(3) Employers shall ensure that: (a) Average illuminance within 5m of a task is at least one-fifth of the task illuminance (b) Glare is reduced to levels that don't impair vision (c) Lighting on rotating machinery eliminates stroboscopic effects (d) Luminaires and lamps are kept clean and repaired/replaced when defective

(4) Emergency lighting for evacuation must provide minimum 0.3 lux at floor level, or 20 lux where machinery must be stopped or dangerous materials are present.



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(5) Emergency lighting must: (a) Activate within 15 seconds of regular lighting failure (b) Last long enough for safe evacuation (c) Be tested at least every three months (d) For directional luminaires, be mounted at least 2m above floor level with appropriate aiming

(6) Building work areas must be sufficiently illuminated for safety.

4. Windows

(1) For visual contact with outside areas, workrooms less than 100 square meters must have windows such that: (a) Total glazed area is at least three-fifths of the square root of floor area (b) Window sills are not higher and heads not lower than 1.5m above floor level (c) Windows are glazed with transparent material

(2) Exceptions may be granted by inspector for processes requiring special light conditions.

(3) Screening required against direct sunlight if it poses safety threat.

5. Ventilation

(1) Workplaces must be naturally or mechanically ventilated to ensure: (a) Air breathed doesn't endanger safety (b) Time-weighted average carbon dioxide doesn't exceed 0.5% by volume over 8 hours (c) Carbon dioxide doesn't exceed 3% by volume at any time (d) Exposure limits for airborne substances aren't exceeded (e) Concentration of explosive/flammable gas, vapor or dust doesn't exceed lower explosive limit

(2) Where ventilation measures are impractical or air is unsafe, employers must provide respiratory protective equipment.

(3) Carbon dioxide limits don't apply where ambient pressure differs by more than 20% from sea level.

6. Housekeeping

(1) Sufficient clear space must be provided around machinery.

(2) Employers shall: (a) Provide at least 2.25 square meters of floor area per employee in indoor workplaces (b) Maintain unimpeded work spaces (c) Keep indoor workplaces clean and free of unnecessary materials (d) Maintain floors, walkways, stairs, passages and gangways (e) Keep roofs and walls sound and leak-free (f) Provide safety measures for floor openings, hatchways, stairways and open sides (g) Protect against falling objects with catch platforms or nets

(3) Articles must not be disposed of from heights except by hoist or chute unless safety measures are in place.



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7. Noise and hearing conservation

Repealed by GN R307 of 7 March 2003.

8. Precautions against flooding

- (1) Where substantial flooding risk exists, employers must have warning systems.
- (2) For water conservation constructions that may cause flooding, employers must have warning systems and notify persons in danger zones.

9. Fire precautions and means of egress

- (1) To expedite evacuation in case of fire, employers shall ensure: (a) Emergency escape doors open outwards (b) Room doors and passages are kept clear and easily opened from inside (c) External exits comply with same requirements (d) Staircases and steps have substantial handrails (e) Fire escape staircases are: (i) Constructed of non-combustible material (ii) Kept clear of obstructions (iii) Don't terminate in enclosed areas (f) Escape routes are appropriately sized for quick egress (g) At least two means of egress are provided, situated as far apart as practicable
- (2) Adequate fire-fighting equipment must be provided and maintained.

10. Offences and penalties

Violations may result in fines up to R1,000 or imprisonment up to six months, with additional penalties for continuous offenses.

11. Withdrawal of regulations

Various regulations from Government Notice R. 929 (1963), R. 2237 (1973), and R. 1934 (1963) are withdrawn.

12. Short title

These regulations shall be called the Environmental Regulations for Workplaces, 1987.