692. Sustainability & Climate Action - Climate Risk & Adaptation - Overheating & Thermal Comfort Visual Check

Category:	Sustainability & Climate Action
Subcategory:	Climate Risk & Adaptation
Status:	**Best Practice**
Type:	Competent Person
Priority:	Recommended
Commonality:	Occasional

Note: This document provides guidance to support compliance but is not a substitute for professional advice.

Why This Task Matters

Your regular visual checks for thermal comfort issues ensure pupils and staff can learn and work in healthy, productive environments that support wellbeing and academic achievement. By identifying overheating problems early, you demonstrate proactive care for occupant comfort, protect health during hot weather, and build confidence in the organisation's commitment to maintaining optimal learning conditions while recognising the vital role facilities staff play in creating comfortable, supportive educational spaces.

Task Summary

Best Practice: This task requires in-house staff to conduct a visual check every four months, looking for signs of poor ventilation, blocked vents, or excessive heat build-up. The inspection should cover all occupied areas including classrooms, offices, libraries, and communal spaces, with particular attention to areas prone to overheating such as south-facing rooms or spaces with large glazed areas. Staff should use systematic observation to identify ventilation blockages, ineffective shading, poor air circulation, and other comfort issues. The process should include checking window controls, ventilation grilles, and temporary cooling measures. Findings should be documented with photographs,

immediate corrective actions taken where safe, and more complex issues referred for specialist attention. This regular monitoring supports thermal comfort between annual professional assessments and helps identify conditions that may breach health or comfort standards.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**: Requires provision of safe working environments including thermal comfort.
- **DfE Building Bulletin 101: Ventilation of School Buildings**: Provides guidance on maintaining thermal comfort.
- **Equality Act 2010**: Ensures thermal comfort for all users including those with specific needs.
- **Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992**: Includes requirements for thermal comfort in work areas.
- **CIBSE Guide A: Environmental Design**: Provides guidance on thermal comfort assessment.

Typical Frequency

This task should be completed every 4 months, ideally aligned with seasonal changes and term patterns. The frequency could vary if overheating issues are identified or during extended hot weather periods. In education settings, quarterly checks provide regular assurance of thermal comfort conditions throughout the year.

Applicability

This task is recommended and occasional, applying to schools and colleges where thermal comfort may be a concern. It is particularly relevant for buildings with natural ventilation, large glazed areas, or in warmer climates, though all educational establishments can benefit from regular thermal comfort monitoring. The task applies more frequently to older buildings or those with known thermal comfort issues, but should be considered for any establishment wanting to ensure optimal learning conditions.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type**: This is a Competent Person task that can be carried out by trained facilities or maintenance staff.
- **Contractor Requirements**: Not applicable as this is a Competent Person task.
- **In-House Requirements**: Staff should have basic training in thermal comfort principles and

building ventilation systems. No specific certifications are required, but familiarity with the building layout is essential.

- **Permit to Work**: No permit to work is normally required for this task.

- **Delivery Model**: This task is normally completed in-house by trained staff, making it cost-effective for regular monitoring between professional assessments.

Key Considerations

Important factors include conducting checks during occupied hours to identify real comfort issues, ensuring staff are familiar with normal building operations, and having immediate access to basic corrective tools. The task should be planned to avoid disrupting normal building operations. Consider weather conditions and seasonal temperature variations when conducting inspections. Risk assessment should focus on identifying potential health impacts from poor thermal comfort.

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Basic understanding of thermal comfort and ventilation principles
- Access to occupied areas during normal operating hours
- Completed checklist template and camera for documentation
- Knowledge of building ventilation and cooling systems

Tools & Materials

- Thermal comfort checklist
- Camera or smartphone for photos
- Basic tools for immediate corrections (if appropriate)
- Temperature measurement device (optional)
- Building access keys/cards

Method (Step-by-Step)

1. **Preparation**: Review previous findings and prepare checklist for systematic inspection.

2. **Systematic Walkaround**: Visit all occupied areas following a predetermined route.

3. **Visual Inspection**: Check for signs of thermal discomfort including:
    - Blocked or closed ventilation openings
    - Ineffective window controls or shading
    - Poor air circulation or stagnant areas
    - Excessive solar gain in specific rooms
    - Inadequate cooling or ventilation systems
4. **Comfort Assessment**: Note areas where occupants may experience discomfort.
5. **Documentation**: Record findings with photographs and complete checklist.
6. **Immediate Actions**: Address simple issues immediately where safe and appropriate.
7. **Reporting**: Log findings and refer complex issues for specialist attention.

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

Inspections should identify visible signs of poor thermal comfort with photographic evidence. Areas with blocked ventilation or inadequate cooling should be prioritised for corrective action.

If Results Fail

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. If significant thermal comfort issues are identified, immediate actions should include improving ventilation and arranging specialist investigation.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

No reinstatement required. Ensure any immediate corrections are completed safely and areas left secure.

Completion Checks

Confirm that systematic inspection has been completed, checklist filled, photographs taken, and findings logged in Compliance Pod.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process**: Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence**: No statutory evidence is required for this task.

- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence**: Completed checklist, annotated photos, and logged actions.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

Common mistakes include conducting checks too quickly without systematic coverage, failing to document findings properly, or not following up on identified issues. Best practices include developing a standard route for consistent coverage, taking clear photographs of issues, and involving staff in thermal comfort awareness. In educational settings, combine checks with other routine activities to improve efficiency. Warning signs include repeatedly finding the same ventilation blockages or frequent occupant complaints about thermal comfort.

Quick Reference Checklist

- [ ] Prepare checklist and review previous findings
- [ ] Conduct systematic walkaround of all areas
- [ ] Check ventilation openings and controls
- [ ] Assess air circulation and cooling effectiveness
- [ ] Document findings with photos
- [ ] Address immediate issues where safe
- [ ] Log findings and refer complex issues
- [ ] Upload evidence to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

Grouping is feasible; align with related tasks of the same frequency and contractor visit.

Related Tasks

- Sustainability & Climate Action - Climate Risk & Adaptation - Overheating & Thermal Comfort Service & Inspection
- Sustainability & Climate Action - Climate Risk & Adaptation - Climate Risk & Adaptation Audit
- Sustainability & Climate Action - Carbon, Energy & Resources - Energy Efficiency Visual Check

Disclaimer

This document is provided for general guidance only. It does not constitute professional advice and should not be relied upon as such. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and

completeness of the information, Compliance Pod Ltd makes no representations, warranties, or guarantees, express or implied, about the information provided. Compliance Pod Ltd accepts no responsibility or liability for any loss, damage, or harm arising from the use of this guidance or from failure to act on identified risks.

Users must ensure that all tasks are carried out in line with current legislation, manufacturer instructions, site-specific risk assessments, and organisational policies. Where necessary, professional advice should be sought from competent and accredited specialists — for example, fire risk assessors, water hygiene consultants, electrical engineers, gas safety contractors, or health and safety advisors.