Outdoor event staff welfare: preparing for changing weather

Outdoor staff need a briefing that can change with the weather. Identify the person who monitors conditions and authorises changes to duties, shelter or work. Explain the available drinking water, rest arrangements, clothing expectations and route for reporting someone who is unwell. Volunteers need this information as clearly as paid staff, especially when they are deployed away from the main welfare point.

UK outdoor worker awareness; site plans define stop-work decisions, shelters and emergency response.

The practical principles

Plan the shift

Check the site weather briefing, clothing requirements, drinking-water points, rest areas and shelters. Know who can suspend a task and how instructions will reach you. Workload, protective clothing and direct sun can increase heat strain. Cold, wet conditions and wind also affect safe work. Report missing shelter, inaccessible drinking water or a task that prevents planned breaks.

Recognise a problem

Heat-related illness may involve headache, dizziness, nausea, thirst or unusual tiredness. Stop work and get assistance if someone becomes unwell. Help them reach a cool place safely and follow first-aid guidance. Confusion, a seizure, loss of consciousness or serious breathing difficulty requires urgent medical help; call 999. Stay with the person and follow the call handler’s advice. Staff should escalate symptoms rather than make a diagnosis.

Respond to the environment

Use designated shelter when directed and follow the event’s lightning, wind and severe-weather procedures. A temporary structure’s suitability depends on the site plan and conditions. Keep clear of unstable structures, damaged electrical equipment and flooded routes. Report changes with the exact location. Supervisors should consider task timing, breaks, exposure and individual needs when arranging outdoor work.

Work through a shift scenario

Fictional exercise: an event begins in mild weather and becomes much hotter during the afternoon. A volunteer feels dizzy and reports it. The supervisor arranges help and moves the person away from the exposure where safe, using the event welfare process and urgent medical assistance when needed. The wider team may also need changes to breaks, rotation or deployment. Do not wait for several people to become unwell before reporting conditions.

Avoid the common failure

A forecast checked the previous evening cannot manage the whole shift. Conditions, tasks and individuals differ. Explain heat, cold, rain and wind arrangements without inventing one universal stop-work temperature. Specialist structural or electrical decisions must stay with the authorised competent people.

A second situation to discuss

Fictional scenario: A colleague working in direct sun becomes confused and unsteady. Another worker wants them to finish the last few minutes of the shift.

Stop the task, call 999 and summon the first aider. Move to a cooler safe location if possible and follow emergency instructions while someone directs responders. Record the incident once immediate care is arranged.

Use a working record

Record the specific arrangements below before the briefing. Keep the wording short enough for a colleague to use during the shift. Where a field does not apply, explain why; where information is missing, assign a person to resolve it. Store personal or sensitive details in the business's approved system.

- Forecast/check time
- deployment
- water/rest/shelter
- reporting contact
- change authority
- staff updates
- welfare action

At the next handover, ask what changed, which action remains open and who now owns it. Close the record only when the agreed follow-up is complete. A recurring problem should inform the next briefing and the relevant operational procedure.

Check understanding

Confusion during hot-weather work requires:

Urgent help and 999 Confusion can indicate a serious heat emergency.

Before a shift locate:

Water, rest areas and designated shelter Welfare facilities need to be accessible.

The shaded break station is now in direct sun

An outdoor event's welfare point was shaded during setup. By mid-afternoon it is exposed and the queue has grown. Staff cannot leave their posts without relief. What should the supervisor review?

Compare your decision

Escalate the changed conditions and reassess the welfare arrangements with the event lead. Check access to drinking water, rest, shade, relief cover and help for anyone unwell. A break written on a rota is ineffective if nobody can take over the post.

Walk the route from the busiest post to the welfare point. Agree who supplies relief and when the team will review the arrangements again.

Sources and scope

- Source: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/
- Source: https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/running.htm

Original workplace examples and suggested record. Prepared 19 October 2026. Use the current linked guidance and the venue's procedures for operational decisions.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details