

Heat Protection Plan of BOKU University

FOR STAFF WORKING OUTDOORS (GARDENS, FIELDS,
FORESTS, OUTDOOR EXPERIMENTS, EXCURSIONS ...)

GOAL: PROTECTION FROM HEAT, UV RADIATION AND OZONE EXPOSURE

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Entry into force

Pursuant to the Heat Protection Regulation, which has been in force since 1 January 2026 (see annex for further information), the following measures to preserve and protect health of employees working outdoors at BOKU University will enter into force on the date of publication in the Official Bulletin.

Need for measures

If GeoSphere Austria issues weather warnings of Heat Warning Level 2 (yellow), UV values from a UV Index of 3 and/or elevated ozone values, BOKU must adjust the duration and intensity of outdoor work to avoid adverse health effects.

Before carrying out longer, continuous outdoor work during particularly heat-affected months (longer than 50 minutes continuously), please review the following checklist. As a supervisor and as an employee, implement organizational and technical measures for employee protection regarding heat and UV exposure as early as possible before the weather events occur.

(Further information on all the following questions can be found on the next pages.)

CHECKLIST	
Do staff working outdoors have access to the heat warning system to assess daily health risk exposure?	☐
Are all affected employees, as per the Heat Protection Regulation, familiar with the BOKU University Heat Protection Plan?	☐
Are all affected employees, as per the Heat Protection Regulation, aware of the option of occupational health counseling?	☐
Is personal protective equipment (UV protection: clothing, skin...) as well as drinking water and shade available?	☐
Is everyone informed about what to do in heat-related medical emergencies?	☐
Is the type of work adapted to the heat?	☐
Is it possible to adjust work hours, and has this been discussed and approved?	☐
Are all affected employees familiar with the break schedule adapted to the heat?	☐
Are there individual health risks related to heat that should be taken into account?	☐
Are colleagues within calling or visual range outdoors, or is there an emergency cell phone available?	☐
Are supervisors or decision-makers who are not working outdoors readily available to make ad hoc changes to workflows or adjust work schedules?	☐

Questions and answers, further information and concrete measures

Where can I find the current Heat Protection Regulation?

In Federal Law Gazette II No. 325, 29/12/2025:

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2025_II_325/BGBLA_2025_II_325.pdf

Which months pose particular risks in terms of heat/UV exposure?

Special attention should be paid to the months of April to September, as UV exposure in the sun is strongest then. Please keep in mind: even with cloudy skies, UV exposure can be high.

Does the BOKU Heat Protection Plan also apply when I travel to workplaces or move between buildings?

No, the measures apply to people who **work primarily outdoors** or for **longer than 50 minutes** at a time, or whose work involves light, moderate, or heavy manual labor. Commuting between sites or workplaces is not covered, as the regulation refers to work activities. Short-duration work is also exempt (§ 1 (2) Heat Reg.). At BOKU, this applies to work lasting less than 50 minutes.

How does this apply to excursions/workplaces outdoors outside BOKU when the stay outdoors lasts longer than 50 minutes?

For **excursions or temporarily visited outdoor workplaces** (e.g., for collecting plant material or monitoring experiments), **protective measures must be planned in advance**. (For example, if there is no shade on site, sun umbrellas or mobile shading should be brought along; adequate hydration must be ensured; and breaks should be scheduled) **All staff must be instructed accordingly**. Any activities that can be moved to the shade (classes, briefings, etc.) should take place there.

What do the GeoSphere Austria warning levels/UV Index and ozone thresholds mean in detail?

- **Heat warning levels** of GeoSphere Austria (excerpt from the [National Heat Protection Plan of Austria](#))

Warning level	Meaning / Threshold
<i>Level 1 – no active warning (green)</i>	No heat stress is currently expected. Threshold: perceived temperature < 30 °C
<i>Level 2 – caution (yellow)</i>	Slightly increased heat stress expected. Threshold: perceived temperature ≥ 30 °C
<i>Level 3 – attention (orange)</i>	Increased heat stress expected. Threshold: perceived temperature ≥ 35 °C
<i>Level 4 – danger (red)</i>	Strong heat stress expected. Threshold: perceived temperature ≥ 40 °C

Source: GeoSphere Austria; Presentation: GÖG

- The **UV Index** includes the following values (excerpt from the [Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management](#))

UV-Index	Exposure	Measures
0–2	low	No special protective measures required.
3–5	moderate	Protection recommended for longer stays in the sun, especially for sensitive skin types I and II.
6–7	high	Protective measures required.
8–10	very high	Protective measures absolutely necessary; avoid direct sun around midday.
over 10	extreme	Protective measures absolutely necessary; avoid direct sun around midday.

- **Ground-level ozone**

Ground-level ozone mentioned in the regulation also has particular significance; the [Environment Agency Austria](#) regularly publishes ozone values in Austria and warning levels.

The following behavior guidelines should be followed (excerpt from the Environment Agency website):

Recommendations for voluntary actions when the information threshold is exceeded:

Ozone concentrations above the information threshold may cause minor health effects in some particularly sensitive individuals and during periods of increased physical exertion. Normal stays outdoors, e.g., walking, swimming, or picnicking, are safe even for sensitive individuals. These individuals should pay particular attention to the further development of ozone concentration in their area. Additional individual protective measures are only necessary when the alert threshold is exceeded.

Recommendations for voluntary behavior when the alarm threshold is exceeded:

Ozone concentrations above the alert threshold can cause irritation of the mucous membranes and respiratory discomfort. Unaccustomed and strenuous exertion outdoors, especially during midday and afternoon hours, should be avoided. Vulnerable persons—such as children with hypersensitive bronchi, people with severe respiratory and/or heart diseases, and people with asthma—should preferably stay indoors in smoke-free environments. For individual health-related advice, it is recommended to consult a general practitioner.

To classify employee exposure—what should be considered?

§ 3 (3) of the Heat Protection Regulation helps with classification and lists examples of **work and conditions** that lead to the implementation of measures:

- *light work, e.g., light manual labor with small hand tools or low-power machines, light assembly work,*
- *moderate work, e.g., sustained hand and arm work, such as hammering nails,*
- *heavy work, e.g., carrying heavy materials, digging,*
- *task-specific additional heat sources or heat exposures such as direct sunlight, work equipment, surfaces heated by solar radiation, asphaltting or flame work, heat accumulation at workplaces with little or no air movement (e.g., construction pits, shafts, trenches, windbreaks),*
- *exposure to ground-level ozone,*
- *design of required clothing or personal protective equipment,*

- *state of the art, e.g., scientific findings, standards,*
- *potential effects on the health and safety of employees,*
- *potential effects on the health and safety of particularly vulnerable employees, e.g., due to age, physical condition, pregnancy, known pre-existing conditions,*
- *potential increase in UV exposure due to surface reflection, e.g., when working with metal sheets or glass surfaces,*
- *acclimatization of employees,*
- *specific hazards due to multi-day heat waves, e.g., increasing exhaustion of employees*

The Heat Protection Regulation also lists examples of vulnerable groups. What does this mean for affected persons and for supervisors in terms of duty of care?

For affected persons:

When assessing health risks, classification according to paragraph (9) of § 3 Heat Reg. (exemplary list: age, physical constitution, known pregnancy, known pre-existing conditions...) and the National Heat Protection Plan* can be helpful. See also particularly vulnerable employees in the *National Heat Protection Plan of the government, page 35 ff; examples: older persons; people with respiratory diseases; kidney diseases; obesity; mental/neurological disorders; pregnant/breastfeeding persons.

Please note: You can consult BOKU University's **occupational physician** to review your personal medical health assessment together. They will advise you comprehensively and assess the health risk situation based on the facts presented. Diagnoses and findings are accessible only to the occupational physician if you choose to share them. Depending on the outcome, you can better assess your health risk at an outdoor workplace with heat/UV/ozone exposure.

Employees working outdoors may seek **occupational health counseling** regarding their personal heat-related risk profile immediately upon starting work, every three years thereafter, or whenever new medical conditions arise that should be taken into account in the risk assessment and annually starting at age 45.

If you already have a **known pre-existing condition** or if your medical/health situation is known to react adversely to heat, UV, and ozone exposure, please always remember to carry any personal medication (e.g., asthma inhaler, insulin...).

For supervisors:

If members of your team belong to a vulnerable group and you are aware of this, please be considerate in the work allocation in line with your duty of care. Employees are, of course, not required to disclose their health situation; diagnoses etc. do not have to be shared with you and may only be disclosed voluntarily by the person concerned. Therefore, you should only respond to health circumstances of your employees that are known to you when coordinating the duration and intensity of work.

Multi-day heat waves cause particular strain for many, even healthy, people. What should be considered?

Here, too, § 3 (12) of the Heat Protection Regulation already takes into account the fact that heat waves lasting several days generally lead to exhaustion and impaired concentration (sleep deprivation, etc.). Therefore, the team should generally make the following adjustments: Shift work involving heavy physical labor to cooler off-peak hours; take a break every 50 minutes in a cooler/shadier environment (for air-conditioned indoor spaces, note: the temperature difference from the heated outdoor environment should not exceed 6 degrees); adjust work schedules (end shifts earlier and make up the lost hours once the heat wave has subsided).

What is recommended regarding adjustments to working hours during the day/in general?

UV exposure is usually highest between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. in heat-intensive months—though this can vary. Preferably shift heavy physical activities to cooler morning hours. Where possible, supervisors may adjust daily working hours according to the heat/UV exposure situation. Any missed hours must be made up on cooler days, in consultation with your supervisor. A written note in the time records with the supervisor's countersignature or approval by email is required. It is advisable to plan scenarios with the supervisor that are tailored to hot days and/or periods in advance, including information on what will be

implemented at Heat Warning Level 2 in the organizational unit and how. That is: work organization, timing and extent of working hours, as well as tasks and personal protective equipment should be discussed in good time with every affected team member to prevent heat-/UV-related workplace accidents. Before excursions and temporary outdoor work lasting longer than 50 minutes, joint precautions at the department/institute and project level must also be discussed.

The following generally applies to general staff: the start of work within flexible working hours can be moved from 7:00 to 6:00 between 1 June and 30 September (see Employment Agreement on Flexible Working Hours); duty rosters for staff excluded from the Employment Agreement can also be adjusted in this period with a start at 6:00.

How should breaks be structured?

Similar to the break guidelines for computer workstations, BOKU University recommends taking a break of at least 10 minutes after every 50 minutes of outdoor work during hot months (retreating to the shade or to rooms that are cooler than the outdoors, drinking, etc.), depending on the level of physical exertion, to allow for necessary acclimatization and cooling of the body.

Where can I find shower facilities at BOKU?

Franz-Schwackhöfer-Haus: basement near the restrooms (room numbers 110 and 112)

TÜWI building: 2nd basement level (room numbers 9 and 10)

Gregor-Mendel-Haus: ground floor (room numbers 36 and 39)

Simon-Zeisel-Haus (Muthgasse III): by the changing rooms, basement (room numbers 15 and 16)

Wilhelm-Exner-Haus: basement (room numbers 24 and 25)

Ingeborg-Dirmhirn-Haus (UFT Tulln): 1st and 2nd floors (near the restrooms on each)

Am I allowed to work alone outdoors?

Due to the possibility of heat-related medical emergencies, BOKU University generally recommends keeping an emergency cell phone within reach when working outdoors and, ideally, having colleagues within calling or visual range.

What is meant by personal protective equipment for heat and UV exposure, and how do I obtain it?

Personal equipment: It is recommended to wear lightweight, breathable clothing; to be provided by the employer (for affected groups in accordance with the Heat Protection Regulation): Head protection, neck protection, protective clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen (each with UV protection), drinking water.

Additionally, as needed: portable shade, bottled drinking water when in areas without a drinking water supply (e.g., during field trips or work-related outdoor activities away from the workplace)

What are the symptoms of heat-related health problems, and where can I find tips?

You can find a collection of tips on coping with heat and heat-related emergencies here on the [AGES](#) website, for example.

How do I act in a heat-related medical emergency?

Source: [Vienna Heat Guide](#)

General first aid measures:

- Stay calm
- Self-protection: Always think of your own safety first! Check whether you, others, or the patient are in danger.
- Reassure the patient and keep them in a comfortable position.
- Physical contact (for example, on the hand or shoulder) and sincere words of encouragement are usually very much appreciated.
- Loosen any tight clothing and ensure a supply of fresh air.
Injured persons should only be moved if absolutely necessary
- Stop external bleeding
- Place unconscious persons in the recovery position
- The absence of vital signs requires immediate resuscitation measures
- Call emergency services: 144

If this is not an emergency and you need medical information or a doctor's visit, call the Medical Radio Service at 141.

If it is not an emergency and you need advice regarding acute symptoms or have questions about how the heat is affecting you, call the Vienna Telephone Health Advisory Service—available 24/7 at 1450. The Vienna Health Advisory Service also serves as a heat hotline during the summer.

Quick guide: First Aid for Heatstroke

Extremely high body temperature, as well as red, hot, dry skin accompanied by headaches, a rapid pulse, and rapid breathing, along with dizziness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and loss of consciousness, are symptoms of (life-threatening) heat stroke. This occurs when the body's temperature-regulating mechanisms are no longer sufficient—sweating fails, and the body cannot cool itself or release the heat it has absorbed. The body temperature rises rapidly to dangerous levels. Heatstroke can lead to organ damage and death. Emergency treatment is required.

The following first aid measures should be taken in the event of heatstroke:

- Move the affected person to a shaded, cool place.
- Call emergency services as soon as possible.
- If the person is unconscious: Keep the airway clear and place the person in the recovery position.
- Cool the affected person quickly using whatever methods are available until their body temperature has dropped (for example, by washing them with cool water or hosing them down with a garden hose, placing them in a tub of cool water, giving them a cool shower, wrapping them in a cool, wet towel, fanning them, etc.)

Concluding remarks

If temperatures rise as expected for the season, take preventive measures in advance to prepare for periods of increased stress:

Gradually acclimate to weather conditions: Adjust the length of time spent outdoors to the temperatures (don't spend 8 hours doing strenuous outdoor work on the very first day temperatures climb above 30 degrees...); During prolonged heat waves, follow the guidelines in the action plan accordingly, shortening time spent outdoors and adjusting activities, as various stress factors—following so-called “tropical nights” and extreme daytime heat—additionally affect reaction times, concentration, and physical exertion.

Use the (still) cooler periods to calmly plan all necessary implementation steps and measures with your team. You can find advice from occupational health staff as well as the Staff Unit for Employee Protection and Health.

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History

Version	Change	by	Approved on	Published
1.0	Creation of the Heat Protection Plan	Eva Baldrian-Wagner	19.06.2026	Official Bulletin