



## Office Climate Control

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We've all experienced it one time or another, the cubicle/office is too cold or too hot. It seems so simple, just fix it and make it right! Adjust the thermostat, turn up the heat, make it cooler or eliminate that draft. Unfortunately, it's not always quite that simple. Some people feel more comfortable in cooler temperatures, while others prefer a warmer environment. To further add to the dynamics, a multitude of other factors can impact a building's indoor temperature. The building design, interior configuration, humidity levels, indoor air movement, outdoor temperatures, heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) settings, and personal garments all play a significant role in our indoor temperature comfort. Many of our facilities utilize a Building Automation System (BAS) to control a facility's indoor temperature. This system monitors the thermostats within the building and controls the preset temperature from a central location.

Unlike Cal/OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention Standard which regulates employee exposure to the sun, there are no specific regulations for indoor temperature. As a general rule, OSHA *recommends* temperature control in the range of 68-76°F. According to The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), temperatures in this range should be comfortable for most people. In general, these temperature ranges are intended to accommodate an employee wearing a normal amount of clothing as to feel neither too cold nor too warm.

The County of Riverside has two Board of Supervisor (BOS) Policies that address indoor temperature issues: (1) BOS Policy H-4, *Conservation of Energy* states, "Set air conditioning and heating controls to comply with settings as not to cool below 76°F, and not to heat above 68°F..."

BOS Policy H-19 addresses *Guidelines on Dealing with Unusual Temperatures in County Facilities*. You can review each policy in its entirety on the Riverside County intranet site.

If you are trying to achieve a comfortable temperature in your immediate work area, keep in mind the following dos and don'ts:

### DO's:

- For general assistance in addressing indoor temperature related issues, please consult with your supervisor.
- Wear appropriate clothing for weather conditions including shoes. Keep a sweater or light jacket handy in your work station for cooler conditions.

### DON'TS:

- Block air vents or grilles.
- Attempt to adjust individual thermostats.
- Place equipment that emits hot or cold, such as refrigerators or computers near thermostats.
- Use portable space heaters.