

Climate Change: Business Preparedness and Work Environment

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October 2025



Climate change is already affecting the domain of work, particularly in the context of ensuring a safe working environment for employees. A survey including 705 managers and employees across various sectors of the economy in Israel found that climate change has already impacted the work environment of 18% of the respondents, with significant differences between different industries. The main risks affecting workers are extreme heat and power outages. In particular, employees exposed to heat reported that while their workplaces are addressing climate change, they are doing so only partially and ineffectively. Overall, it appears that workplaces in the country are still a long way away from comprehensive and systematic preparedness for the impacts of climate change. Employers, the government, and labor unions must take proactive steps to develop clear, comprehensive policies and procedures, especially in heat-intensive industries, to ensure a safe and healthy work environment as climate impacts intensify.

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We would like to thank the **Macro Center** for Political Economics for their participation in the research, and **Shahar Meir** for helpful comments. In addition, we are grateful to **the Hans Böckler Foundation, Peretz Naftali**, and the **Friedrich Ebert Foundation** for their support, which made it possible to carry out the research and produce this document.

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Table of Contents

Page no.

Abstract	6
Introduction	8
1. The impact of climate change on the work environment is perceived differently by employees and managers.	9
2. Extreme heat and power outages – the main risks affecting workers.	11
3. Respondents report that transportation, hospitality, infrastructure, and industry are the sectors most affected by climate change.	12
4. Transportation and manufacture – the industries with the highest share of employees exposed to heat.	15
5. Employees exposed to heat reported that climate change had a greater impact on their work environment.	17
6. Employees exposed to heat report that their workplaces do address climate change, but only partially and ineffectively.	18
7. Limited protection for employees exposed to heat.	21
Summary and conclusions	23
Annex: Distribution of questions and answers in the survey	24
Bibliography	32

List of Figures

Page no.

Figure 1: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "In recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at my principal workplace."	9
Figure 2: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Are there clear policies and procedures for dealing with extreme weather events in your principal workplace?"	10
Figure 3: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Which risks caused by extreme weather due to climate change should be addressed to ensure a safe and healthy work environment in your principal workplace? (multiple choice question)"	11
Figure 4: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "In recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at my principal workplace."	13
Figure 5: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Are there clear policies and procedures for dealing with extreme weather events in your principal workplace?"	14
Figure 6: Share of employees exposed to heat, by industry.	16
Figure 7: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "In recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at my principal workplace."	17
Figure 8: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Have measures been implemented at your principal workplace to mitigate risks from extreme weather and to improve employees' health and safety?"	18
Figure 9: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "The measures implemented to mitigate risks have led to improvements in employees' health and safety."	19
Figure 10: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Which of the following measures are provided by your workplace to address heat stress? (multiple choice question)"	22

Abstract

Introduction

The impacts of escalating climate change are also affecting Israel's work environment. This paper is based on a survey conducted among employees and managers in Israel, examining their perceived exposure to climate change and how they are handling it.

About 18% of respondents reported that climate change has already impacted their work environment, while many anticipate various risks in the future.

Differences between managers and employees

The impact of climate change is perceived differently by employees and managers:

- More managers than employees reported that climate change has affected their work environment.
- Managers are more aware than employees of their organization's policies and procedures for dealing with extreme weather events.

Differences between employees exposed to heat and those not exposed

The main risks of climate change concerning workers are extreme heat and power outages. According to respondents to the survey, the work environments most affected are in the transportation, hospitality, infrastructure, and industrial sectors. About 39% of employees are exposed to heat during their work, with the highest numbers in the transportation and industrial sectors. Employees exposed to heat reported that their workplaces are addressing climate change, but only partially and ineffectively. 59% of employees stated that their workplace has taken steps to address the risks of extreme heat; however, only 54% indicated that these measures have actually improved

health and safety conditions. This gap may be explained by the fact that only 24% of employees reported that their workplace has established policies and procedures for dealing with extreme weather events.

We found that protection for heat-exposed workers is limited:

- 36% of heat-exposed workers reported that their worksite is shaded.
- 39% of heat-exposed workers reported access to an air-conditioned space to cool down during breaks.
- Only 71% of heat-exposed workers reported having access to cold drinking water.

Summary

Climate change will not disappear. To ensure a safe and healthy work environment amid increasing heat stress, the government, employers, and labor unions must understand the risks and possible coping strategies, and develop comprehensive policies and procedures accordingly. This conclusion is particularly urgent for economic sectors with a high number of employees exposed to heat.

Introduction

Almost every year, heat waves in Israel set new records. Such was the case in August 2025, when record-breaking temperatures were recorded all over the country (Israel Meteorological Service, 2025). Climate change in our region is characterized by a significant increase in the number of days of extreme heat during the summer, alongside a rise in the number of flooding days in the winter. The frequency of such events and similar ones is expected to grow in the coming decades (Government of Israel, 2021). These changes also affect the domain of work, particularly in ensuring safe working environments for employees. Research by the Arlozorov Forum found that climate change threatens the working conditions of roughly 301,000 positions (Raviv, 2023). But to what extent do employees actually feel the effects of climate change, and do they feel that their workplaces are taking steps to protect them?

To address these questions, we conducted a survey of 705 respondents in collaboration with the “Maagar Mochot” institute. Respondents included workers across various sectors of the economy and management levels. The survey was administered via an online panel^a and therefore does not constitute a random sample. Furthermore, no weighting was applied to align the respondents’ distributions to that of the general population. The survey was conducted in April 2025.

The results of climate change also affect the domain of work, particularly in ensuring safe working environments for employees.

This paper presents the results of a survey aimed at discovering to what extent employees in Israel actually feel the effects of climate change, and whether they feel that their workplaces are taking steps to protect them.

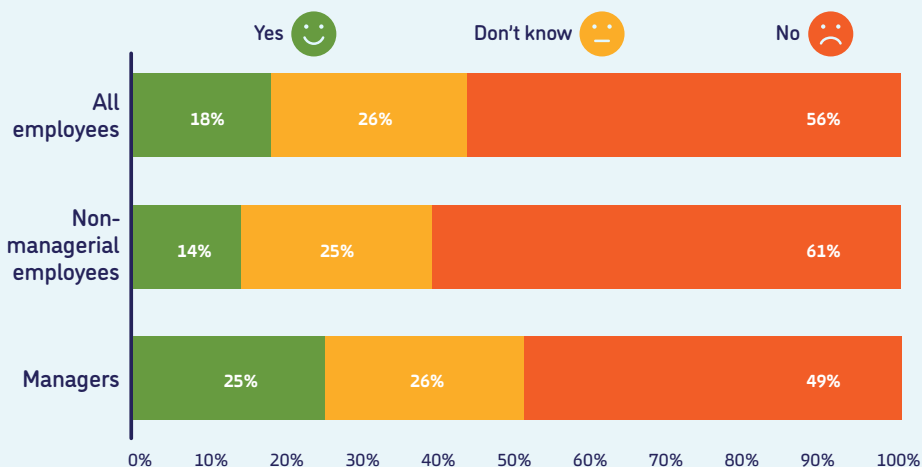
^a An online panel consists of a fixed sample of participants who take part in recurring surveys, usually via e-mail.

1.

The impact of climate change on the work environment is perceived differently by employees and managers.

288 of the respondents to the survey were managers^b, and 398 were non-managerial employees. The findings indicate perception gaps: managers and employees reported experiencing the impact of climate change on their work environment differently (Figure 1). About one-fifth (18%) of all employees reported that climate change has already affected their work environment, with 25% of managers reporting such an impact, compared with only 14% of non-managerial employees. This gap may stem from a lack of awareness among non-managerial employees regarding climate change and its impact on the workplace.

Figure 1: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement:
"In recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at my principal workplace."



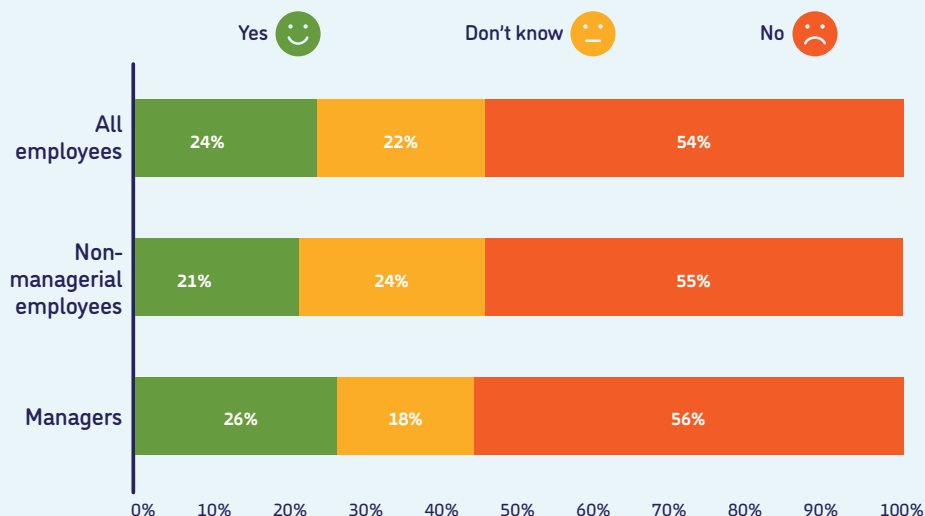
Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;
Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

^b A manager was defined as a respondent who reported having the authority to promote or dismiss employees.

The data presented in Figure 2 indicate that only 24% of employees reported that their workplace has clear policies and procedures in place to address extreme weather events. Comparing the responses of managers and employees shows that 26% of managers reported the existence of such policies and procedures, compared to only 21% of non-managerial employees. Moreover, 18% of managers and 24% of non-managerial employees stated that they did not know whether such policies exist in their workplace. These data may reflect a lower awareness among employees regarding how their workplace addresses climate change.

More managers than employees reported the existence of policies and procedures in the workplace to address extreme weather events.

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Are there clear policies and procedures for dealing with extreme weather events in your principal workplace?"



Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;
Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

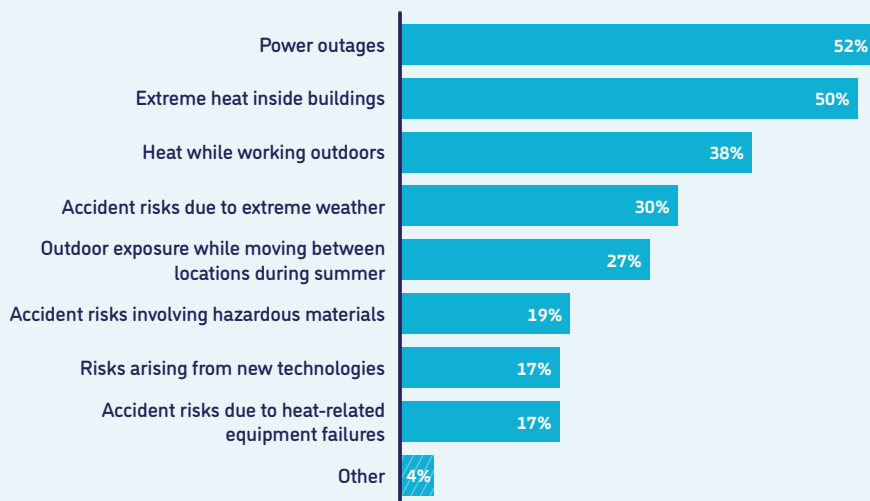
2.

Extreme heat and power outages – the main risks affecting workers

Employees were asked which risks arising from extreme weather due to climate change should be addressed in the workplace to ensure a safe and healthy work environment (a multiple-choice question). The responses indicate that most employees recognize power outages (52%), extreme heat inside buildings (50%), and heat while working outdoors (38%) as the pre-eminent risks.

Most employees recognize power outages, extreme heat inside buildings, and heat while working outdoors as the pre-eminent risks in their workplace.

Figure 3: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Which risks caused by extreme weather due to climate change should be addressed to ensure a safe and healthy work environment in your principal workplace? (multiple choice question)".



Dashed values indicate low reliability due to the small number of observations

The figure shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that each of the listed risks should be addressed.

Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;

Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

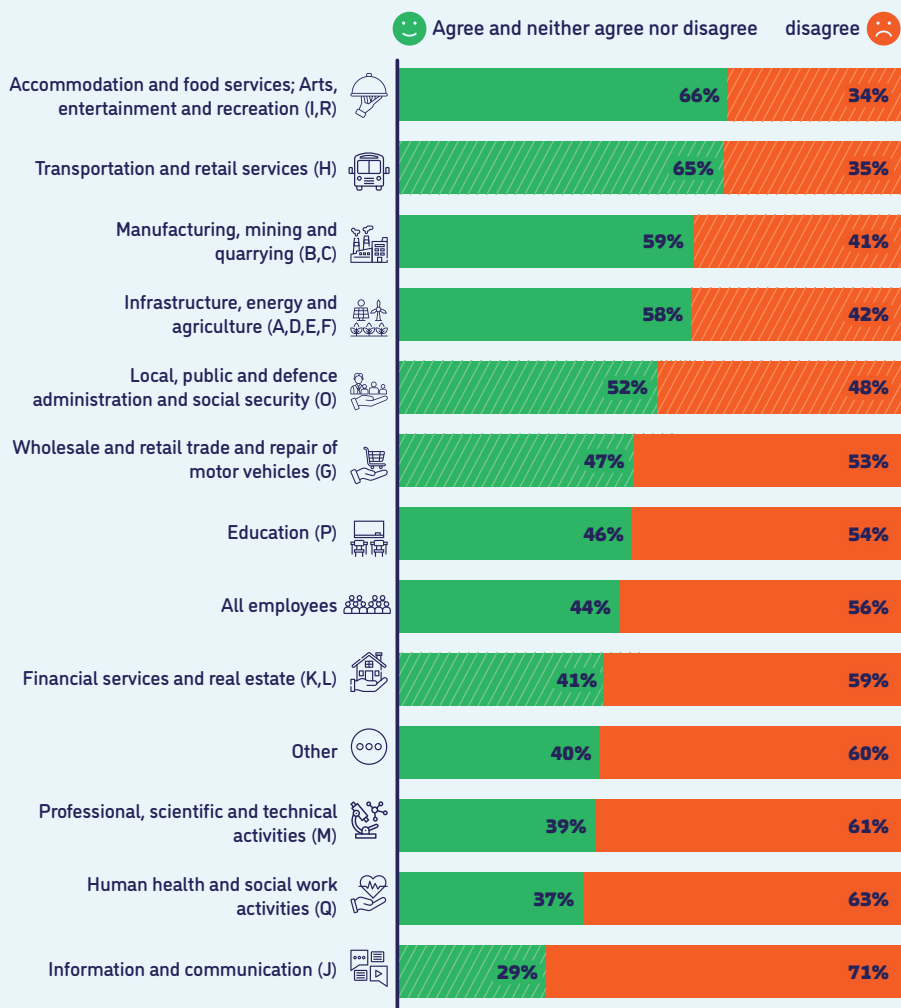


3. Respondents report that transportation, hospitality, infrastructure, and industry are the sectors most affected by climate change.

The impact of climate change is perceived differently in different sectors of the economy. While 66% of the respondents in the accommodation and food services and art, entertainment, and recreation industries reported that they somewhat agree with the statement, only 29% of employees in the information and communication industries did so. The data reveal that climate change affects the work environment differently across industries.

The data reveal that climate change affects the work environment differently across industries.

Figure 4: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "In recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at my principal workplace."



100%

Dashed values indicate low reliability due to the small number of observations

Responses "Agree" and "Neither agree nor disagree" were merged into the category "Partially Agree" to improve reliability.

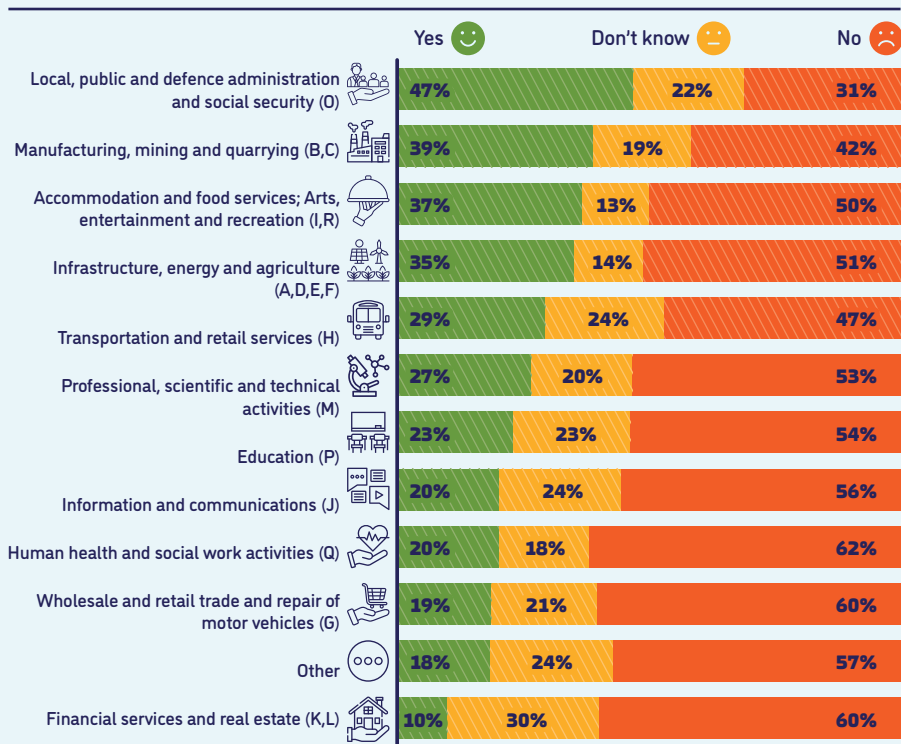
Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;

Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

Employees report the presence of policies and procedures for addressing extreme weather events primarily in the industries most affected by climate change. At the same time, the industry of local, public, and defense administration and social security leads in this regard, with 47% of employees reporting that such policies exist. It can be assumed that in this industry, which includes government ministries and security forces, clear procedures exist for a wide variety of scenarios.

Employees report the presence of policies and procedures for addressing extreme weather events in the industries most affected by climate change.

Figure 5: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Are there clear policies and procedures for dealing with extreme weather events in your principal workplace?"



100%

Dashed values indicate low reliability due to the small number of observations.

Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;

Processed by: Arlozorov Forum



4. Transportation and manufacture – the industries with the highest share of employees exposed to heat.

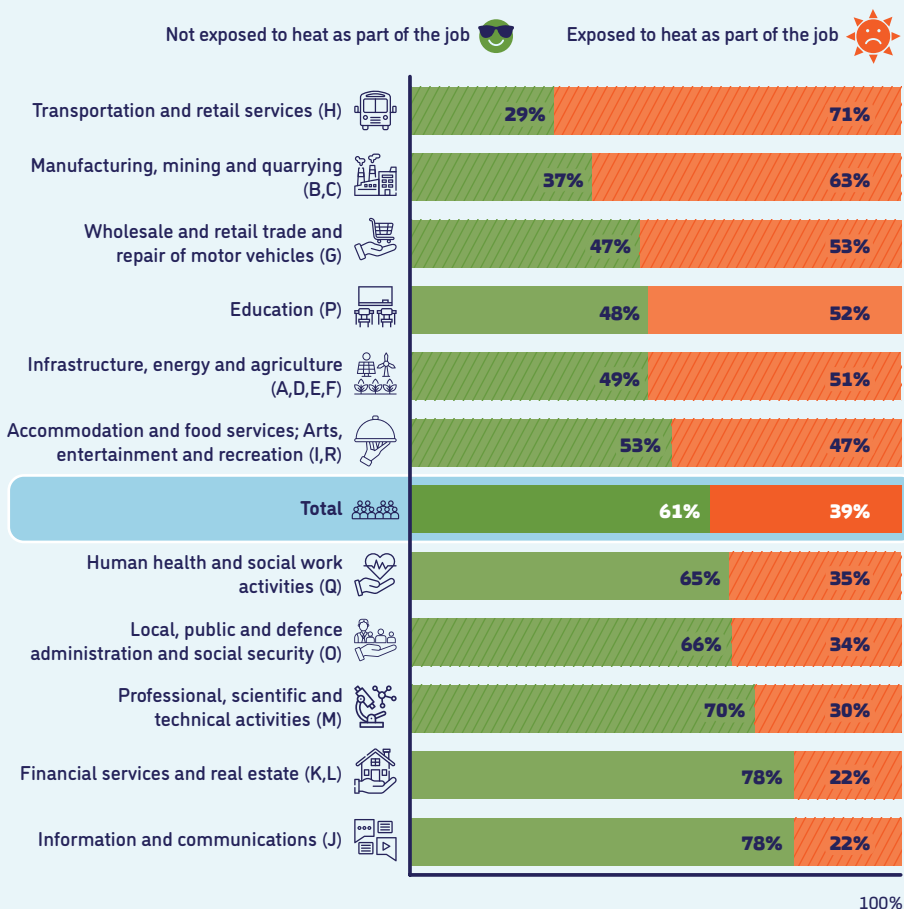
We created an additional segmentation of respondents based on their extent of heat exposure during the workday. Respondents were divided into two groups: “Not exposed to heat as part of their work” (which includes employees who are exposed to heat only during their commute or not at all), and “Exposed to heat as part of their work” (which includes employees exposed to heat up to 2 hours, 2-4 hours and more than 4 hours per day). Figure 6 shows that 39% of employees are exposed to heat as part of their work.

The share of employees exposed to heat increases significantly in specific industries. For example, in the transportation and retail services industry, and in the manufacturing, mining, and quarrying industry, the share of employees exposed to heat as part of their work is 71% and 63%, respectively. Note that due to the small number of observations in each industry, the reliability of the data is low.

The data show that 39% of employees are exposed to heat as part of their work.

The share of employees exposed to heat increases significantly in specific industries.

Figure 6: Share of employees exposed to heat, by industry.



Dashed values indicate low reliability due to the small number of observations.

"Exposed to heat as part of the job" includes employees exposed to heat for up to 2 hours, 2-4 hours, or more than 4 hours per day.

Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;

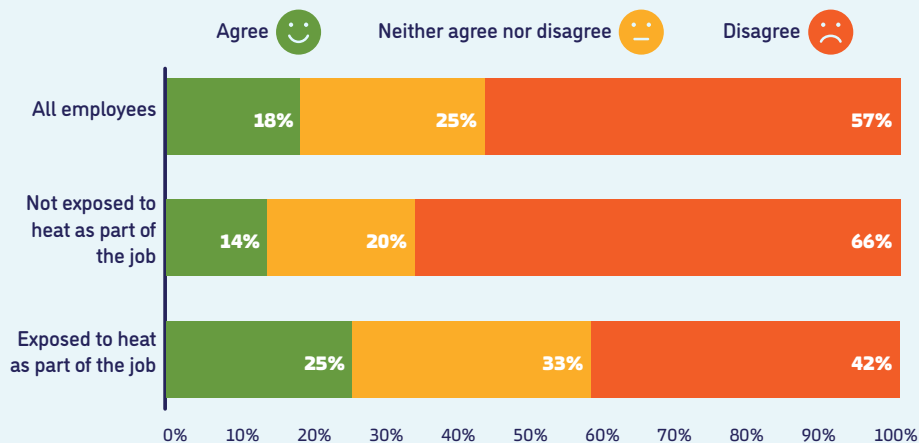
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5. Employees exposed to heat reported that climate change had a greater impact on their work environment.

Figure 7 presents the level of agreement among employees that, in recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at their principal workplace, broken down by heat exposure at work. The data show that employees exposed to heat are more likely to agree that climate change has significantly affected their work environment (25% agreed, 33% neither agreed nor disagreed), compared to those not exposed to heat (14% agreed, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed).

Employees exposed to heat are more likely to agree that climate change has significantly affected their work environment.

Figure 7: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "In recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at my principal workplace."



"Exposed to heat as part of the job" includes employees exposed to heat for up to 2 hours, 2-4 hours, or more than 4 hours per day.

Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;

Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

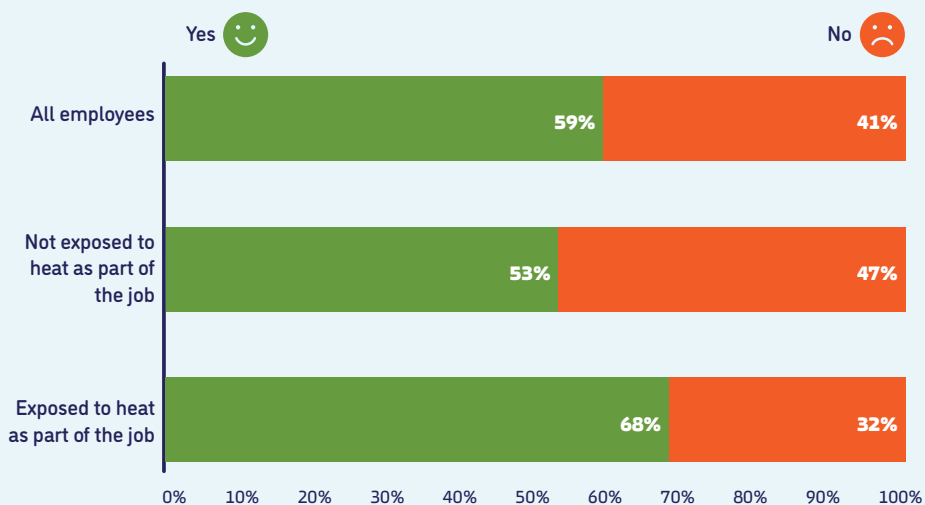
6.

Employees exposed to heat report that their workplaces do address climate change, but only partially and ineffectively.

Among employees exposed to heat, 68% reported that measures had been taken to improve health and safety in their workplace, compared to only 53% of the employees not exposed to heat. Overall, 59% of all employees reported that such measures had been implemented. In other words, workplaces employing workers exposed to heat are more likely than others to take measures to address the risks associated with heat exposure.

Workplaces employing workers exposed to heat are more likely than others to take measures to address the risks associated with heat exposure.

Figure 8: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Have measures been implemented at your principal workplace to mitigate risks from extreme weather and to improve employees' health and safety?"



"Exposed to heat as part of the job" includes employees exposed to heat for up to 2 hours, 2-4 hours, or more than 4 hours per day.

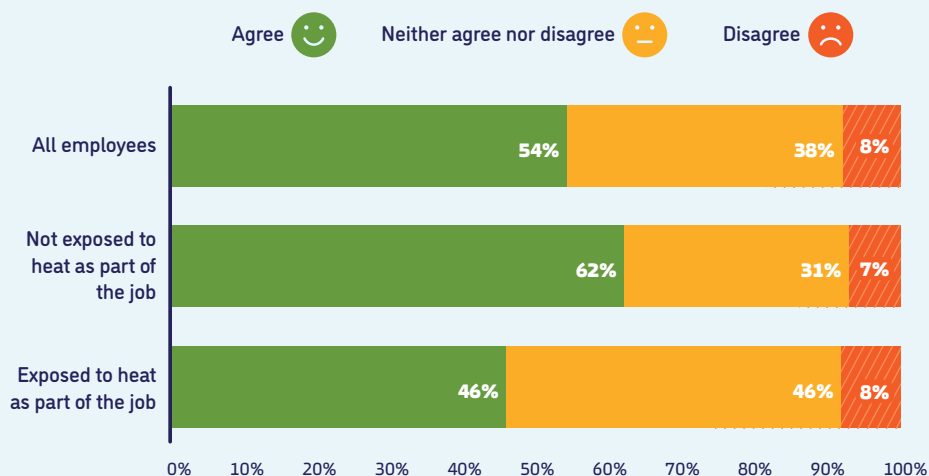
Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;

Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

However, when asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that the measures taken had actually improved health and safety, only 54% of the employees agreed. This highlights a gap between the actions taken and employees' perception of their effectiveness. The gap becomes even more pronounced when comparing heat-exposed and non-exposed employees. Although 68% of employees exposed to heat reported that measures have been implemented in their workplace, as shown in Figure 8, only 46% of the employees exposed to heat believed that these measures have improved health and safety in their workplace, as shown in Figure 9, compared to 62% among employees not exposed to heat.

Only 54% of employees agreed that the measures taken had actually improved health and safety. This highlights a gap between the actions taken and employees' perception of their effectiveness.

Figure 9: Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: "The measures implemented to mitigate risks have led to improvements in employees' health and safety."



Dashed values indicate low reliability due to the small number of observations. "Exposed to heat as part of the job" includes employees exposed to heat for up to 2 hours, 2-4 hours, or more than 4 hours per day.

Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;
Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

While many employees reported that workplaces have taken measures to address risks resulting from climate change, the absence of proactive planning and clear procedures, as shown in Figure 2, may be one of the reasons why these measures are ineffective.

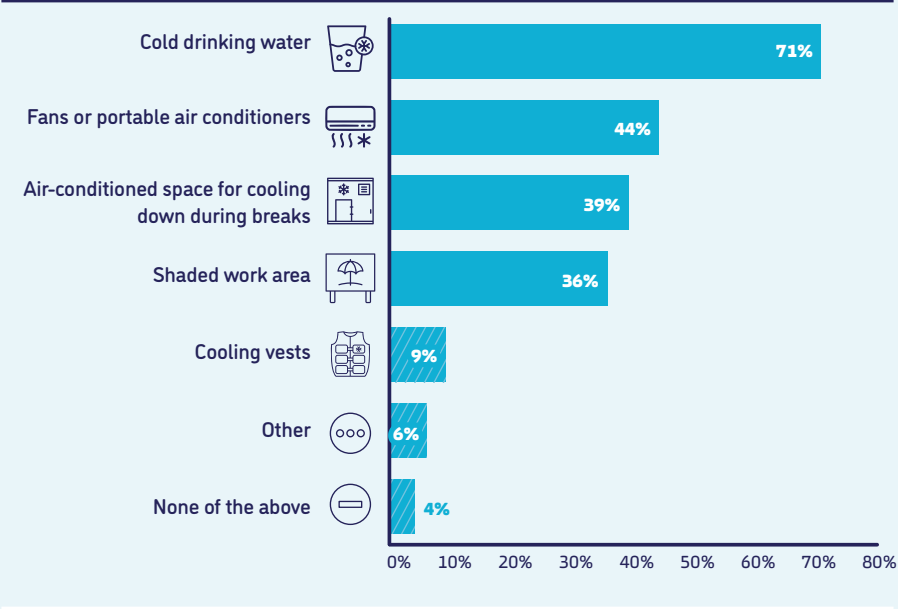


Limited protection for employees exposed to heat

Employees were asked about the protective measures provided by their employers to cope with high temperatures. In the analysis below, we focus on employees exposed to heat as part of their job. The findings suggest that, in many cases, employees exposed to heat are left to cope with the heat on their own. While a relatively high share, 71%, reported that their employer provides cold drinking water, the situation indicated by the complementary figure is disturbing: 29% of employees exposed to heat did not report receiving cold drinking water at work. In addition, only 39% of employees exposed to heat reported that their employer provides access to an air-conditioned space for breaks, and only 36% reported that shading is provided in their work area.

The findings suggest that, in many cases, employees exposed to heat are left to cope with the heat on their own.

Figure 10: Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Which of the following measures are provided by your workplace to address heat stress? (multiple choice question)".



Dashed values indicate low reliability due to the small number of observations.

The figure presents the share of employees exposed to heat who reported that the measure is provided by the employer. "Exposed to heat as part of the job" includes employees exposed to heat for up to 2 hours, 2-4 hours, or more than 4 hours per day.

Source: Climate Change Survey – Businesses' Preparedness and Work Environment;
Processed by: Arlozorov Forum

Summary and conclusions

The intensity and frequency of extreme heat events resulting from climate change are expected to worsen in the coming decades, undermining the work environment of employees in Israel and making it less safe and healthy. Data from the survey reveal a gap between managers and employees in how they perceive the impact of climate change on their work environment. Significant differences also emerge between sectors of the economy. For example, 66% of workers in the accommodation and food services industry reported that climate change has affected their work environment, compared with only 29% of the workers in the information and communication industry. The data further show that about 39% of employees in Israel are exposed to heat as part of their work. Among them, 25% reported that climate change has affected their work environment, while only 46% said that measures taken to address the risks had actually improved health and safety conditions. It appears that the absence of clear policies and procedures for addressing the impacts of climate change leads employers to take ad hoc measures when extreme events occur, and in consequence their effectiveness is questionable.

The intensity and frequency of extreme heat events resulting from climate change are expected to worsen in the coming decades, undermining the work environment of employees in Israel and reducing health and safety

To respond efficiently and effectively to risks that will intensify in the years ahead, the government, employer organizations, and labor unions must build professional knowledge about the threats and possible responses and formulate corresponding policies and procedures. This conclusion is especially relevant and urgent in industries where a particularly high proportion of employees is exposed to heat as part of their job.

Annex: Distribution of questions and answers in the survey

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Do you have managerial authority in your principal workplace, enabling you to promote or dismiss employees?	Yes	288	42.0%
	No	398	58.0%
Do you manage or have managed in the past?	Managers	24	8.8%
	Employees	187	68.2%
	Employees and managers	63	23%
Which economic sector does your principal workplace belong to?	Private sector – High-tech.	100	14.7%
	Private sector – general (for-profit company).	352	51.9%
	Public sector (government companies and ministries, local authorities, education system, etc.).	195	28.8%
	The third sector (non-profit organizations, charities, religious organizations)	31	4.6%
	Other	119	16.9%

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Which economic sector does your principal workplace belong to?	Education (For example, teaching in schools, higher education institutes, private tutoring, and additional teaching professions).	103	14.6%
	Human health and social work activities (For example, health and mental health services, nursing employees at hospitalization institutions, retirement homes, etc.).	84	11.9%
	Information and communications (High-tech companies, stationary and mobile communication, publishing).	79	11.2%
	Professional, scientific and technical activities (legal, architectural and engineering services, research and development).	60	8.5%
	Financial services, real estate, and tourism (real estate activities, insurance and credit companies, travel agencies, car rentals).	60	8.5%

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Which economic sector does your principal workplace belong to?	Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles (selling products to end consumers, such as supermarkets, or selling products to businesses, such as agricultural commodities).	48	6.8%
	Infrastructure, energy, and agriculture (construction, agriculture, electricity and water supply, and other infrastructure services).	37	5.2%
	Manufacture, mining, and quarrying (coal mining, oil production, and other sorts of mining and quarrying).	36	5.1%
	Local, public, and defense administration and social security (local authorities and government ministries, military and police).	32	4.5%

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Which economic sector does your principal workplace belong to?	Accommodation and Food Services, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (e.g., restaurants and catering, the entertainment industry, museums, and libraries)	30	4.25%
	Transportation and Commercial Services (e.g., bus and taxi drivers, appliance repair)	17	2.41%
Are there clear policies and procedures for dealing with extreme weather events in your principal workplace?	Yes	167	23.7%
	No	384	54.5%
	Don't know/Refuse to answer	154	21.8%
Have measures been implemented at your principal workplace to mitigate risks from extreme weather and to improve workers' health and safety?	Yes	331	58.9%
	No	231	41.1%
For how long during your workday are you exposed to heat, indoors or outdoors?	Exposed to heat as part of the job	260	39%
	Not exposed to heat as part of the job	407	61%
At my principal workplace, climate change and its impact on maintaining a safe and healthy work environment have been adequately addressed	Agree	260	41.5%
	Neither agree nor disagree	184	29.4%
	Disagree	182	29.1%

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
In recent years, climate change has had a significant impact on the work environment at my principal workplace	Agree	121	18.5%
	Neither agree nor disagree	167	25.6%
	Disagree	365	55.9%
Which risks caused by extreme weather due to climate change, should be addressed to ensure a safe and healthy work environment in your principal workplace? (multiple choice question)	Power outages	307	
	Extreme heat inside buildings	295	
	Heat while working outdoors	227	
	Accident risks due to extreme weather.	179	
	Outdoor exposure while moving between locations during the summer	161	
	Accident risks involving hazardous materials.	110	
	Accident risks due to heat-related equipment failures	103	
	Risks arising from new technologies	103	
	Other	22	

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Which of the following measures are provided by your workplace to address heat stress? (multiple choice question)	Cold drinking water	519	
	Fans or portable air conditioners	382	
	Air-conditioned space for cooling down during breaks	265	
	Shaded work area	200	
	None of the above – as they are unnecessary	64	
	Cooling Vests	42	
	Other	40	
At my principal workplace, appropriate measures have been taken to address climate change	Neither agree nor disagree	166	26.2%
	Disagree	303	47.8%
	Agree	165	26%
Do you agree with the following statement: “The measures taken to mitigate the risks have led to improvements in employees’ health and safety”?	Agree	176	54.3%
	Neither agree nor disagree	121	37.3%
	Disagree	27	8.3%
Place of birth	Israel	593	84.1%
	Former USSR or Eastern Europe	59	8.4%
	Western Europe	16	2.3%
	North America	12	1.7%
	Arab countries and North Africa	10	1.4%
	Other	15	2.1%

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Average income	Up to 6,000	50	8%
	6,001-10,000	175	28%
	10,001-15,000	165	26.4%
	15,001-20,000	142	22.7%
	20,001-30,000	62	9.9%
	Above 30,000	31	5%
Education	Academic, including advanced Yeshiva (post-high school religious seminary).	383	54.3%
	High school, including Yeshiva high school	160	22.7%
	Post-secondary, including technician and practical engineer.	150	21.3%
	Elementary school	8	1.1%
	Other	4	0.6%
Age	Mean (sd) : 42.6 (15.4)		
	min ≤ med ≤ max:		
	5 ≤ 40 ≤ 99		
Level of religious observance	Religious	80	11.3%
	Secular	315	44.7%
	Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi, Hardal)	45	6.4%
	Traditional (Masorati)	263	37.3%
	Other	2	0.3%

Questions	Answers	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents
Religion	Judaism	596	84.5%
	Islam	72	10.2%
	Druze	16	2.3%
	Christianity	15	2.1%
	Other	6	0.9%



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The Arlozorov Forum is a policy-oriented research institute that aims to raise the quality of life of all residents of Israel through good jobs, fair pay, and equal opportunities.



The Arlozorov Forum is a nonprofit organization, founded by the Histadrut – The General Federation of Labour in Israel. It has been established to formalize and promote socio-economic policy that will shape Israel as a welfare state, through striving for inclusive and sustainable growth, expanding and improving public services, and strengthening trade unions and social dialogue



In pursuit of this vision, the Arlozorov Forum pairs its up-to-date and comprehensive research with effective outreach advocacy efforts among elected officials and policy makers on the local, regional, and state level, and through the trade union movement, in cooperation with partners in civil society.



Only by promoting a fair economy and a just society can we fulfill the vision of the founders of the State of Israel to develop the country for the benefit of all its residents, while ensuring complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants - today and in future generations.

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