

# AIRFED SUIT WORK - ONR GUIDANCE



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## Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) guidance for a clearer understanding of the physiological and ergonomic challenges when using airfed suits (AFS).

This covers all stages of AFS use, from planning, selection and training through working to reviewing and improving, based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. A nuclear industry stakeholder group actively participated in gathering evidence and information. The guidance draws extensively on industry experience and good practice.

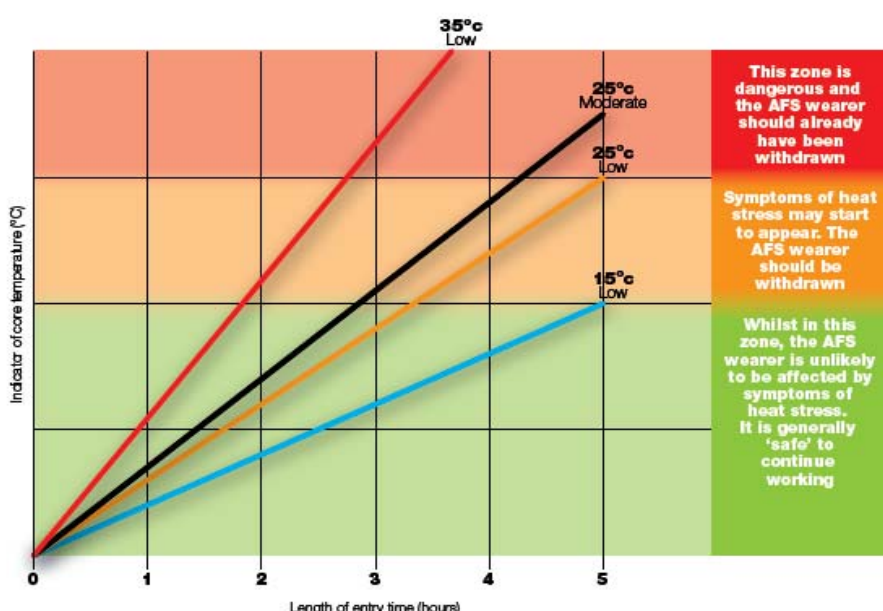
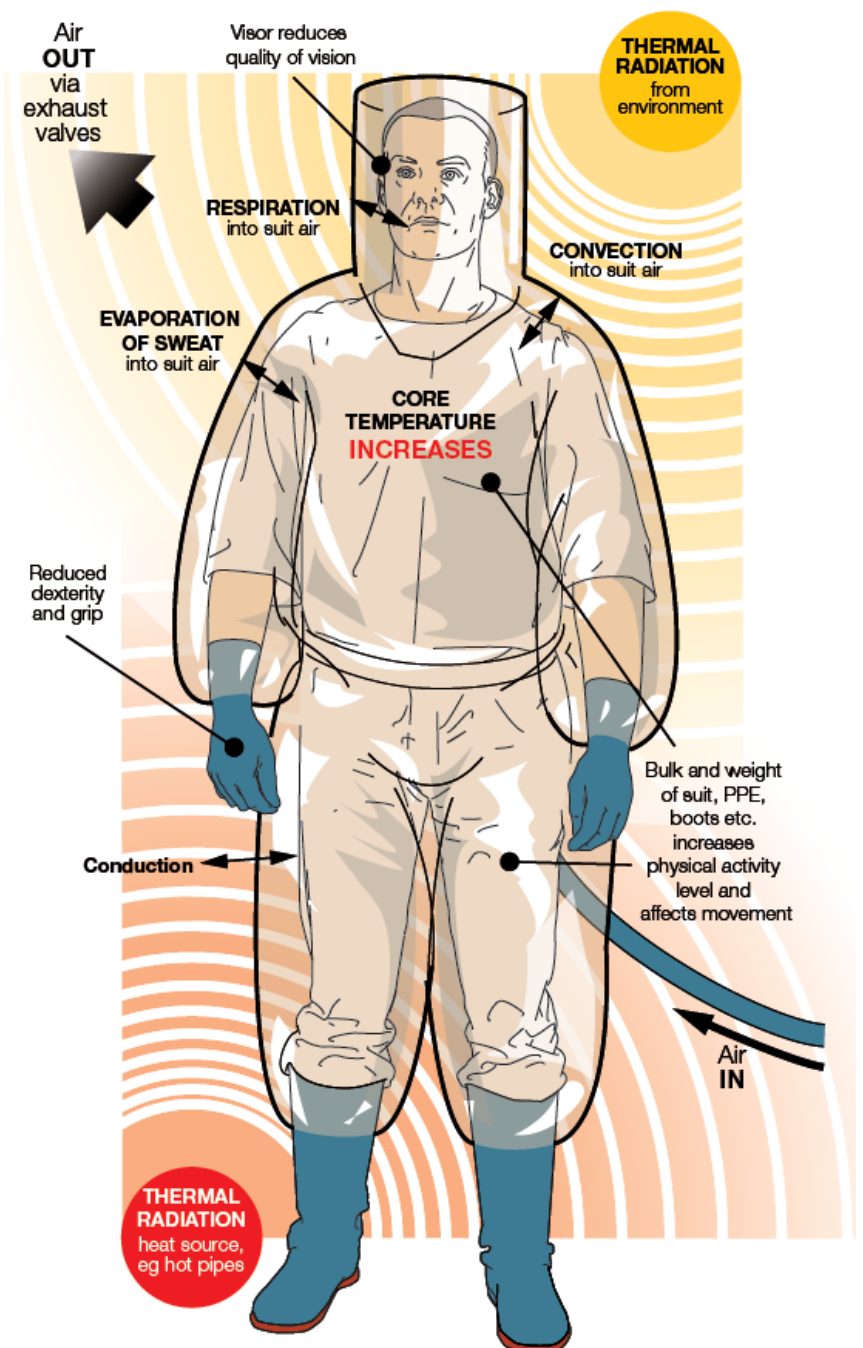
### METHODS

After a literature survey, HSL assessed practical AFS use at decommissioning sites. We used direct observation, procedure reviews, discussion groups and surveys. Examples of good practice and areas which offered room for improvement or where information was felt to be lacking were used as topics in the guidance.

Next, laboratory trials at HSL investigated the effects of wearing AFS ensembles in different environments. HSL volunteers wearing different ensembles provided by the sites conducted simulated workplace activities based on decommissioning tasks. The data were used for new recommendations on maximum safe entry durations and water volumes needed for rehydration after leaving the work area.

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Risk assessment, careful planning and preparation are essential. Involve workers for better results.
- ✓ TREAT PPE, WORK TASK AND WORK METHOD AS A SINGLE INTEGRATED SYSTEM.
- ✓ Select the right people – medically fit and with the right competencies (training plus experience).
- ✓ ALWAYS CONSIDER THE INDIVIDUAL – WE ALL RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO HEAT AND COLD.
- ✓ Use a non-radioactive but realistic work area for training and preparation.
- ✓ EDUCATE EVERYONE SO THEY CAN RECOGNISE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEAT ILLNESS and DEHYDRATION AND TAKE NECESSARY ACTION.
- ✓ Work at a steady pace.
- ✓ ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO SAY IF THEY HAVE A PROBLEM.
- ✓ Think about heating and cooling. Inactivity after getting hot can be a problem.
- ✓ Remember rehydration after leaving the work area and away from work.
- ✓ Debrief, review and learn lessons. Use worker input to improve procedures and processes.



Recommended maximum safe entry durations (HSL trial) - average person – one entry per day – not general working times (which may be shorter)

read the guidance:ONR  
internet link

[www.hse.gov.uk/nuclear](http://www.hse.gov.uk/nuclear)

With thanks to the industry stakeholder group, ONR and HSL.