



# Skin cancer and outdoor work.

A work health and safety guide.



Information and support

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**Cancer  
Council**





**Skin cancer and outdoor work: A work health and safety guide.**

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# Contents.

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Purpose of this resource.....	2
<b>The case for sun protection at work</b> .....	<b>3</b>
The harmful health effects of ultraviolet radiation.....	3
Skin cancer: The facts.....	5
Skin cancer: A workplace disease priority area.....	5
Legal obligations.....	5
<b>Facts about ultraviolet radiation</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Factors affecting levels of UV radiation.....	7
Measuring UV.....	9
The sun protection times.....	11
Photosensitivity.....	11
UV radiation and glass.....	12
UV and heat.....	13
<b>Protecting your workers</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Risk assessment.....	15
Factors affecting levels of UV exposure.....	15
Sun protection measures.....	15
Engineering controls.....	16
Administrative controls.....	17
Personal protective equipment and clothing.....	18
Training workers to work safely in the sun.....	24
A workplace sun protection policy.....	25
Monitoring program effectiveness.....	26
<b>Health surveillance and skin cancer</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Should I organise skin checks in my workplace?.....	27
Tips for checking your skin.....	27
Workplace medical checks and skin cancer.....	29
<b>References and contacts</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Further information and contacts.....	30
Explanation of terms and abbreviations.....	31
References.....	32
Appendices.....	33
Appendix 1: A sample sun protection policy for workplaces.....	33
Appendix 2: Toolbox talk: UV protection and skin cancer prevention.....	35
Appendix 3: Quiz: UV as a workplace hazard.....	37
Appendix 4: UV risk assessment for outdoor work.....	39
Appendix 5: Template letter for workers: for workplaces offering skin checks.....	42
Appendix 6: Template letter for workers: for workplaces not offering skin checks.....	43



# Introduction.

Those who spend all or part of the day regularly working outdoors are at increased risk of skin cancer.<sup>1</sup> This is because the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the major cause of skin cancer, including melanoma.<sup>2</sup> All skin tones can be damaged by exposure to UV radiation. Damage is permanent, irreversible and increases with each exposure.<sup>3</sup> Both high intensity and low intensity UV radiation exposure has been linked to an increased risk of skin cancer.<sup>3,4</sup>

Under Australian workplace health and safety legislation, employers must take steps to protect workers from harmful levels of exposure to UV radiation, and reduce the risk of skin cancer.<sup>5</sup>

Implementing a comprehensive sun protection program, which includes a range of simple protective measures, can prevent UV-related injuries and reduce the suffering and costs associated with skin cancer—including reduced productivity, morale and financial returns.

Occupations and industries especially at risk due to the outdoor nature of the work include:

- farmers
- painters
- plumbers
- heavy vehicle drivers
- animal/horticultural
- handypersons
- electrical and communications workers
- automobile drivers
- construction workers
- engineers
- civil contractors
- warehousing
- miners
- carpenters
- vehicle trades
- emergency workers
- passenger transport
- machine operators
- scientists
- PE teachers and fitness instructors
- those who work around water—lifeguards, fishermen, marine workers
- outdoor council workers<sup>6</sup>

## Purpose of this resource

This booklet outlines the relationship between exposure to UV radiation and skin cancer. It provides you with information and advice to understand and confidently implement good sun protection policies and practices in your workplace.

A comprehensive sun protection program is described, including various sun protection control measures presented as per the hierarchy of workplace hazard controls. Tips for success are included, along with a sample policy and practical resources, including a toolbox talk resource that may assist you with the development and implementation of your sun protection program.

# The case for sun protection at work.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Skin cancer, including melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer, is the most common cancer in Australia.

Despite being a highly preventable disease, two in three Australians will develop skin cancer by the age of 70.<sup>7</sup> In Australia it's estimated approximately 200 melanomas and 34,000 other skin cancers diagnosed each year are the result of UV damage in the workplace.<sup>8</sup>

Outdoor workers receive between five and 10 times more UV radiation exposure than indoor workers. It is not surprising that outdoor workers—who are required to spend long periods of time working in the sun, year after year—have a higher than average risk of skin cancer. However, with workplace policies that are embedded into every day practice, the risk presented to outdoor workers can be significantly reduced.

## The harmful health effects of UV radiation

Exposure to UV radiation can damage the skin and eyes. Short-term damage can be visible, presenting as skin reddening, sunburn or a suntan, while other damage can take many years to surface, such as premature ageing of the skin and skin cancer.<sup>9</sup>

### Sunburn and tanning

Sunburn is a radiation burn to the skin. In Australia, sunburn can occur in as little as 15 minutes on a fine January day.<sup>10</sup> All types of sunburn, whether serious or mild, can cause permanent and irreversible skin damage.

Tanning is a photoprotective response to UV-induced DNA damage, causing more melanin (pigment) to be produced, thereby darkening the skin. A suntan is a sign of skin damage—not a sign of health—and every suntan contributes to an increased skin cancer risk.<sup>11</sup>

### Solar keratoses and premature ageing of the skin

Solar keratoses are red, flattish, dry, scaling areas on the skin, also known as sunspots. Sunspots are a warning sign that a person is at higher risk of skin damage and skin cancer.

Most visible signs of ageing are the result of damage to the skin caused by exposure to UV radiation. This can include skin wrinkling, loss of elasticity, irregular pigmentation and altered skin texture.<sup>3</sup>

*"The risk of exposure to solar UV radiation may not be obvious for some workers, for example vehicle drivers like taxi, bus, truck, delivery and courier services. Certain workers like physical education teachers may be in and out of the sun during the day so exposure may be intermittent. The accumulated exposure creates a risk to their health and safety."*

— Stephanie Creagh, Director  
Safe Work Australia, 2018

### Eye damage

Acute effects of exposure to UV radiation on the eye include photokeratitis (inflammation of the cornea and the iris) and photoconjunctivitis (inflammation of the conjunctiva), more commonly known as snow blindness or welder's flash. Symptoms range from mild irritation to severe pain.

Long-term exposure to UV radiation contributes to age-related macular degeneration and cataracts, both a cause of blindness. Long-term effects may also include pterygium (white or creamy opaque growth on the cornea), squamous cell carcinoma of the conjunctiva and cancer on the skin surrounding the eye.<sup>4</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW ?

It is a common misconception that you can 'feel yourself getting sunburnt'. UV radiation cannot be seen or felt, so it can damage your skin without you knowing. In fact, it can take up to 24 hours for UV damage to be seen and felt.





## Skin cancer: The facts

UV radiation is the major cause of skin cancer. Our body is made up of tiny building blocks called cells. Cells normally grow, divide, die and are replaced in a controlled way. Cancer occurs when the cells of the body are damaged, causing them to grow out of control.

Skin cancer can grow when skin cells are damaged. In most cases this damage is caused by overexposure to UV radiation.<sup>4</sup>

The top layer of the skin contains three different types of cells: basal cells, squamous cells and melanocytes. Skin cancer types are named after the type of skin cell in which the cancer develops.

The three types of skin cancer are:

1. **Basal cell carcinoma (BCC)** is the most common type of skin cancer. It grows slowly over months and years and may damage nearby tissues and organs if left untreated.
2. **Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC)** is less common but grows faster. It may spread to other parts of the body if left untreated.  
Basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas are often grouped together and called non-melanoma skin cancers.
3. **Melanoma** is the least common, but most dangerous type of skin cancer. Most skin cancer deaths are from melanoma. It is often fast growing and can spread to other parts of the body where it can form a secondary cancer.<sup>4</sup>

## Skin cancer: A workplace disease priority area

Skin cancer can result from repeated and long-term exposure to UV radiation in the workplace.<sup>12</sup> UV radiation is, therefore, a workplace hazard that must be reduced as much as reasonably practicable. The most common cause of compensated cancer claims between 2000 to 2009 was sun exposure (51 per cent).<sup>13</sup> A total of 1,970 workers' compensation claims for sun-related injury/disease have been made in Australia between 2000 and 2012, at a total cost of \$63 million in compensation payments.<sup>14</sup> It is suggested that, given the lag time between UV exposure and the development of skin cancer, it is likely compensation claims greatly understate the actual incidence of work-related skin cancer.

## Legal obligations

Work health and safety legislation, specific to each Australian state or territory, has the clear objective of preventing illness and injury at work and saving lives.

All employers or Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) must protect workers by providing a safe working environment that is free of health risks. This includes taking proper steps to reduce overexposure to UV radiation for workers who spend all or part of their time working outdoors.

Workers also have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and must cooperate with employers' efforts to improve health and safety in the workplace.<sup>5</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW ?

Skin cancer is highly preventable: at least 95 per cent of all skin cancers are caused by overexposure to UV. This means that if we reduce our exposure to UV, we reduce our skin cancer risk. Both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers can appear anywhere on the body, not just sun-exposed areas.



To work safely in the sun, workers must follow workplace sun protection policies and procedures, attend training and follow instructions and advice provided, and use personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed.

Other key documents providing technical advice and guidelines on sun protection for outdoor workers include:

- Radiation Protection Series 12 (RPS 12): Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (2006)—Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA). Visit [arpansa.gov.au](http://arpansa.gov.au) to obtain a copy.
- Guide to Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR)—Safe Work Australia. Visit [safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au) to obtain a copy.

*“If there is potential for a worker to sustain injury, there is potential for WorkSafe inspectors to take action, and we will.”*

—John Merritt, Executive Director  
WorkSafe Victoria, 2003

Refer to your state or territory work health and safety authority for more information on health and safety.

### SKIN CANCER JUDGMENT: A WAKE-UP CALL TO INDUSTRY

15 August 2003 (SunSmart Victoria Program Media Release).

The verdict delivered in a landmark hearing against Boral Bricks today highlights the importance of sun protection in the workplace, according to Cancer Council.

A judge in the County Court today found that skin cancer is considered ‘serious’ and ‘dangerous’ enough for Eric Reeder, a retired truck driver, to sue his employer of 35 years for damages.

Mr Reeder has developed multiple skin cancers on his back, neck and shoulders and has had malignant melanomas removed from his back. He has to undergo regular treatment to remove multiple skin cancers.

SunSmart Campaign Manager, Craig Sinclair said, “Mr Reeder’s case is the first court case in Victoria to establish that skin cancer can be a serious occupational injury.

“This ruling is very significant and is a wake-up call to all industries that employ outdoor workers... This case puts sun protection on the agenda with other well-known occupational health and safety issues.”

For more compensation claim examples, refer to *Cancer Council Western Australia: Workers’ compensation claims paid in Australia 2000–2009, Occupational exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.* [cancerwa.asn.au](http://cancerwa.asn.au)

# Facts about ultraviolet radiation.

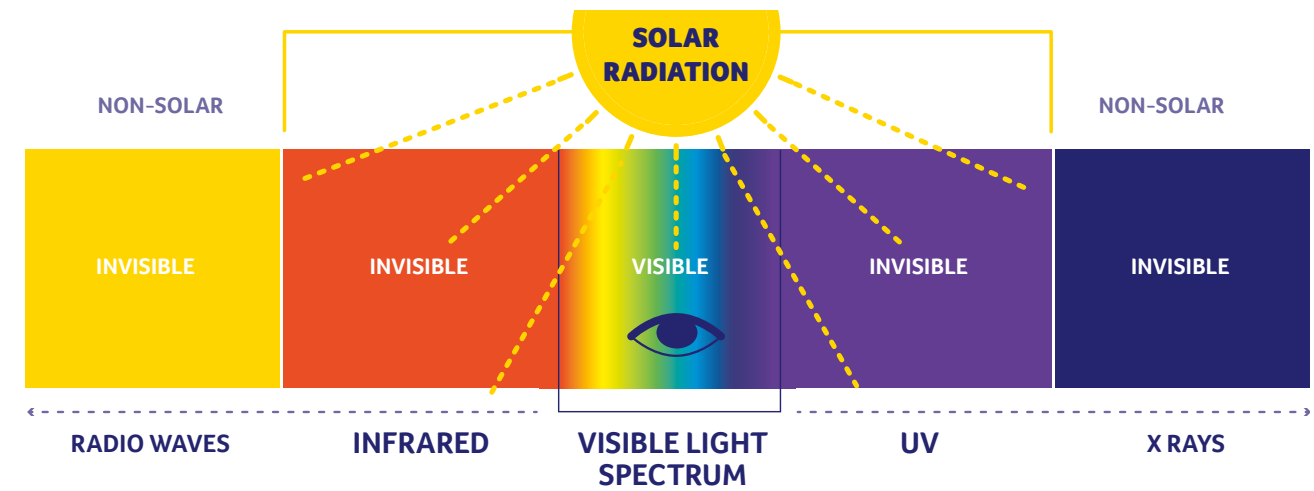


Figure 1: Electromagnetic radiation emitted by the sun.<sup>8</sup>

UV radiation is part of the electromagnetic spectrum emitted by the sun. But unlike the sun’s light, which we can see, and the sun’s infrared radiation, which we feel as heat, our senses can’t detect UV radiation.<sup>15</sup>

UV radiation is divided into three types: UVA, UVB and UVC. While all UVC radiation is absorbed by the atmosphere, all UVA and about 10 per cent of UVB radiation does reach the Earth’s surface. Both UVA and UVB are known causes of skin cancer.<sup>7</sup>

#### DID YOU KNOW ?

UV radiation from the sun:

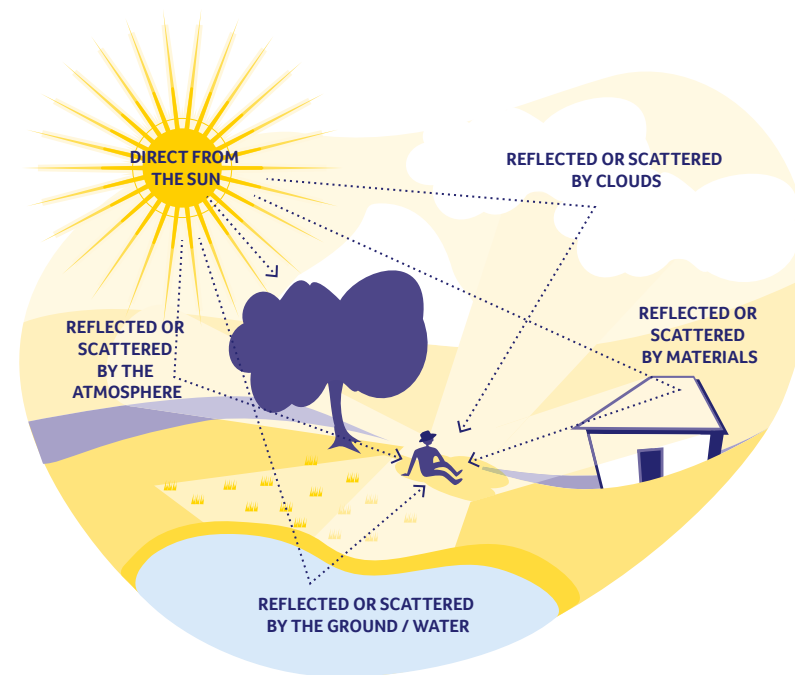
- is high-energy radiation, capable of causing damage to living organisms
- is carcinogenic to humans
- cannot be seen or felt
- is not related to temperature
- can be high even on cool and cloudy days
- can pass through clouds
- can pass through loosely woven material
- can bounce off reflective surfaces such as metal, concrete, water and snow.

## Factors affecting levels of UV radiation

UV radiation can reach you on the ground directly from the sun. It can also be scattered by particles in the air and reflected by ground surfaces such as metal, concrete, sand and snow.<sup>16</sup>

The total amount of UV radiation present in a given location is affected by:

- sun elevation—the higher the sun is in the sky, the higher the levels of UV radiation at the Earth’s surface. Therefore, levels of UV radiation are highest in the middle of the day, and during summer months
- latitude—the closer to the equator you are, the higher the levels of UV radiation
- cloud cover—UV radiation can pass through light cloud cover, and on lightly overcast days the intensity of UV radiation can be similar to that of a cloud free day. Heavy cloud can reduce the intensity of UV radiation. Scattered cloud has a variable effect on levels of UV radiation, which rise and fall as clouds pass in front of the sun
- altitude—at higher altitudes, the atmosphere is thinner and absorbs less UV radiation
- ozone—ozone absorbs some of the UV radiation that would otherwise reach the Earth’s surface
- reflective surfaces—some building and ground surfaces such as polished aluminium, construction materials, lightly coloured concrete and water can reflect UV radiation back onto the skin and eyes.



Material	Percentage of reflected UV radiation
Grasslands	1-2%
Lawn, grass	2-5%
Soil, clay	4-6%
Asphalt road	4-9%
Beach sand, wet	7%
Boat deck	7-9%
Open water/ocean	3-8%
Concrete	8-12%
Beach sand, dry	15-18%
White house paint	22%
Sea surf, foam	25-30%
Snow	50-88%

Figure 2: Percentage of UV radiation reflected by different surfaces. Source: Cancer Council Victoria. Shade for everyone.

*“For most of the day, there is as much scattered solar UV radiation from the sky as there is from the direct sun. Employers need to adopt a combination of sun-protective measures and controls that consider both risks.”*

— Rick Tinker, Section Manager  
Assessment and Advice, ARPANSA, 2018

Generally, when the UV Index is at 3 and above, sun protection is required. At this level, the amount of UV radiation reaching the Earth’s surface is high enough to damage unprotected skin, which can lead to skin cancer. However, because UV damage accumulates over time, it is recommended that outdoor workers—or those working near highly reflective surfaces—use sun protection year-round, even when the UV Index is below 3.

For the best protection, a combination of sun protection measures is needed (hat, covering clothing, sunglasses, shade and sunscreen).<sup>18</sup>

### Measuring UV

We cannot see or feel UV radiation; therefore, managing the risk of overexposure to UV radiation relies on regularly monitoring UV levels. UV radiation is quantified on a UV Index and in UV doses to enable employers and PCBUs to manage the risk of overexposure.

#### The UV Index

Levels of UV radiation vary across Australia on any given day. The UV Index, a rating system adopted from the World Health Organization, describes the amount of UV radiation at the Earth’s surface.

The values of the UV Index range from zero upward. The higher the number, the higher the levels of UV radiation and the less time it takes for damage to occur.<sup>17</sup>






<b>11+ EXTREME</b>
<b>8-10 VERY HIGH</b>
<b>6-7 HIGH</b>
<b>3-5 MODERATE</b>
<p><b>A COMBINATION OF THE FIVE SUN PROTECTION MEASURES ARE RECOMMENDED:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  SLIP         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  SLOP         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  SLAP         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  SEEK         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  SLIDE         </div> </div>
<b>1-2 LOW</b>
<p><b>SUN PROTECTION IS GENERALLY NOT REQUIRED UNLESS YOU ARE AN OUTDOOR WORKER OR WORKING NEAR HIGHLY REFLECTIVE SURFACES LIKE CONCRETE.</b></p>

Figure 3: The UV Index.



## UV doses

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) reports solar UV in Standard Erythral Doses or SEDs. Exposure to one SED per day is considered safe for most people. When the UV Index is extreme, two SEDs are enough for people with pale skin to burn.

The graphs below show the number of SEDs—hourly and the total—that can be accumulated on a winter’s day (Figure 4) versus a summer’s day (Figure 5).

As you can see, from the red line showing maximum daily recommended SEDs, the amount of hourly and total exposure in both winter (total of 11 SEDs on this day) and summer (total of 68 SEDs on this day) are enough to damage unprotected skin and eyes.

Visit ARPANSA to view hourly and daily accumulated **UV Dose Reports** for all capital cities in Australia in SEDs.

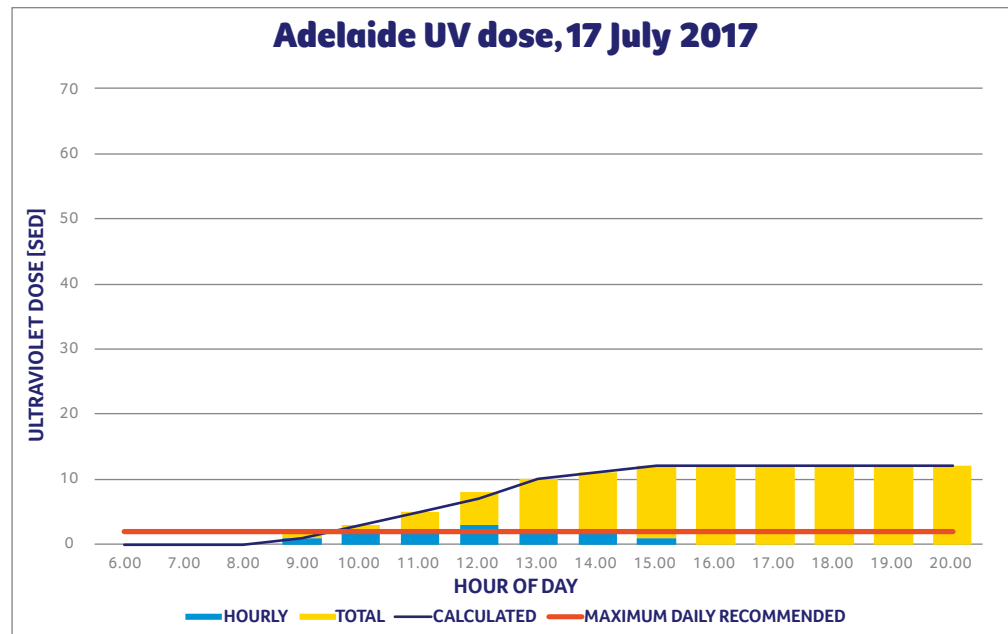


Figure 4: Hourly accumulation of SEDs on a winter day with a maximum UV Index of 2. Total = 11 SEDs.

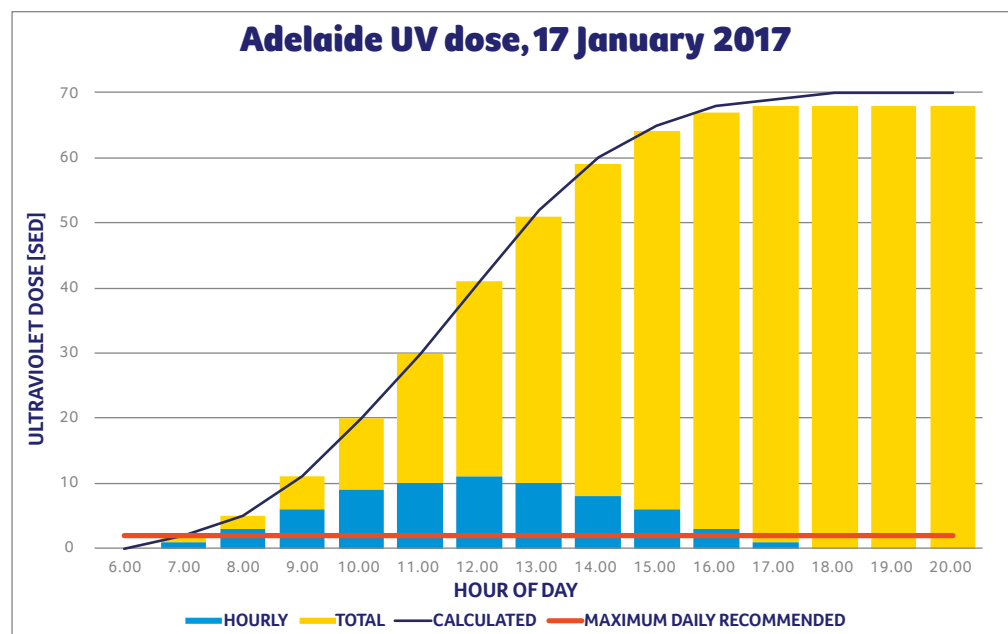


Figure 5: Hourly accumulation of SEDs on a summer day with a maximum UV Index of 12. Total = 68 SEDs.<sup>10</sup>

## The sun protection times

The sun protection times are a forecast of when the UV Index will be 3 and above for that day, which means sun protection measures are recommended, including a hat, covering clothing, sunscreen, shade and sunglasses. Daily sun protection times can be found at:

- SunSmart website ([sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au))
- Cancer Council website ([cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au))
- Bureau of Meteorology website ([bom.gov.au/uv](http://bom.gov.au/uv))
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency ([arpansa.gov.au](http://arpansa.gov.au))

The sun protection times are reported daily in some television and radio weather forecasts, and in newspapers around Australia. They are also available from the following SunSmart tools:

### The SunSmart widget

The SunSmart widget shows the daily sun protection times and can be displayed on a workplace intranet or website as a reminder to workers to protect their skin. Using data supplied by the **Bureau of Meteorology** and the **Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency**, the widget also shows the maximum forecast and real-time UV level for your location.

The SunSmart widget can be added to your workplace intranet pages by visiting [sunsmart.com.au/widget](http://sunsmart.com.au/widget)

### The SunSmart app

The free **SunSmart app** provides daily sun protection times and weather information for locations across Australia. The app also includes daily sun protection time reminders, sunscreen calculator, a sunscreen reapplication reminder and information about UV and sun protection.

It is free for mobile and tablet devices on the App Store and Google Play.

## Photosensitivity

Photosensitivity is an abnormally high sensitivity of the skin or eyes to UV radiation. This can cause the skin to become damaged more easily, thereby increasing the risk of skin cancer.<sup>18</sup>

Photosensitivity is caused by some medical conditions, such as lupus, or ingestion, inhalation or skin contact with substances known as photosensitisers. Some substances that cause photosensitivity include industrial chemicals, medications, drugs, plants and some essential oils and fragrances.<sup>18</sup>

A risk assessment used to identify work situations where workers are exposed to UV radiation should also identify any photosensitising substances which may be associated with the work people do. Refer to the product Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for all products used in the workplace to identify any photosensitising substances. Individuals using medications should be encouraged to talk to their doctor or pharmacist about the risk of increased photosensitivity as a result of the medicine. Alternative medication may be available.

COAL TAR AND DERIVATIVES	
anthracene	phenanthrene
pitch	creosote
DYES	
acridine	fluorescin
bromofluorescein	methylene blue
eosine	rhodamine
erythrocin	rose bengal
CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS	
chlorobenzols	triphenyls
diphenyls	
PLANTS	
bergamot	fennel
bind weed	fig
buttercup	lemon
chrysanthemum	lime
dill	St John's Wort

Table 1: Common substances that cause photosensitivity. Source: Safe Work Australia. **Guide on Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet radiation (UVR)**, 2013.

## UV radiation and glass

There are many different types of glass. Each provides very different levels of sun protection.

### Building glass

UVA transmission through building glass is highly dependent on the type of glass. Laminated building glass reduces transmission of UVA completely, while tempered building glass and smooth annealed building glass can allow around 70 per cent of UVA transmission.<sup>19</sup> Where windows are under deep eaves, verandas or awnings, the transmission of UV radiation is reduced.

Employers with building glass that is not laminated may want to consider window tinting if workers are spending extended periods of time close to a window that receives direct sun, or have a photosensitive skin disorder.

### Vehicle glass

Laminated windscreens, which are made of a tough plastic layer bonded between two panes of glass, have UPF ratings of 50+. However, the plain window glass used in car side windows is usually about a UPF 12, which provides only moderate protection unless clear or tinted film is applied.<sup>20</sup>

A person sitting in a car can still receive significant exposure to UV radiation. Cancer Council recommends:

- employers consider tinting the side and rear windows of work vehicles and that work vehicles have air conditioning so that the side windows remain closed
- people who spend long periods of time in a car without tinting use sun protection (hat, sunglasses, long clothing and sunscreen).

For more information about window tinting, refer to the Cancer Council **Fact Sheet on Tinted Windows**.

Source: Cancer Council Australia. **Fact sheet – Tinted Windows, 2017**.

Note: Film and tint applied to car windows must meet state and territory regulations. The **Window Film Association of Australia and New Zealand** has information on regulations.

## The difference between UV and heat

In addition to UV, the sun emits other forms of electromagnetic radiation, including visible light and infrared radiation. We can see visible light and we feel infrared radiation as heat. Temperature refers to infrared radiation—not UV—so it is incorrect to use temperature as a guide to determine when sun protection is needed (see Figure 1 on [Page 7](#)). As you can see in Table 2 below, the temperature can vary across a week as cool changes move in that affect the temperature, but the maximum UV remains very high. Sun protection is needed on all of these days despite cooler or cloudy conditions on some of the days. In fact, the highest UV recorded that week is on the coolest day.

DATE IN MELBOURNE	MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE (°C)	MAXIMUM UV INDEX
28 Jan 2018	38 degrees	9.9
30 Jan 2018	21 degrees	10.5
1 Feb 2018	22 degrees	9.4
3 Feb 2018	32 degrees	9.6

Table 2. Example of a week in Melbourne showing the maximum temperature and UV Index for each day (data from BOM).

The graph below (Figure 6) also shows how heat (temperature) and UV act differently on one particular day. UV (blue line) peaks in the middle of the day (at solar noon), whereas temperature (red line) peaks around 3 pm. They do not follow the same pattern; again demonstrating we cannot connect the risk of over-exposure to UV to temperature. UV can be high on cool or cloudy days. Notice the UV is above 3 (green line) from 9 am to 5 pm on this day but the temperature remains hot past 8 pm that evening.

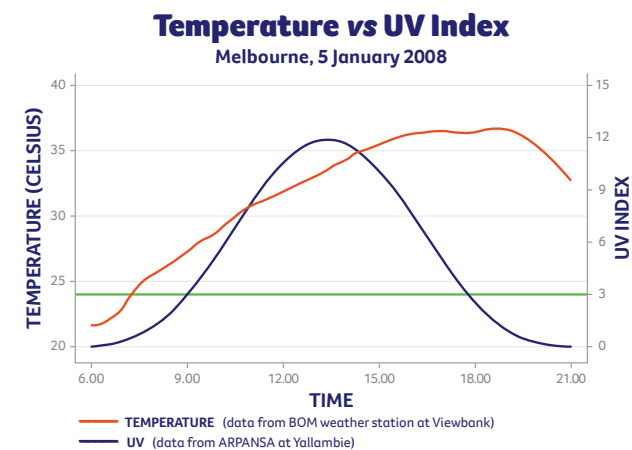


Figure 6: Temperature vs UV between sunrise and sunset in Melbourne. Please note that this graph depicts a hot, cloud free day. This pattern of temperature and UV behaviour may vary depending on the temperature and amount of cloud on a particular day.

## Heat illness

Heat illness covers a range of medical conditions including heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and skin rashes. Signs and symptoms of heat illness include nausea, dizziness, clumsiness, collapse and convulsions. If left untreated, heat illness can be fatal. (Refer to **Safe Work Australia guidance on heat**).

While exposure to UV radiation and heat illness are separate work hazards, the effect of heat must be considered when implementing a sun protection program for the following reasons:

- Working in hot conditions may contribute to non-compliance with sun protection measures. The use of personal protective equipment and clothing may decline due to heat discomfort.
- Inappropriately designed and heavy clothing worn for sun protection can contribute to a worker's risk of heat illness and reluctance to wear it. Select material and a design that provides sun protection while keeping workers cool in hot conditions.

### Heat and UV: Control together

In some cases, control measures can reduce workers' risk of both heat illness and exposure to UV radiation. These include:

- provision of shade for outdoor work (shade may be portable, built or natural shade from trees)
- rest breaks in cooler, shaded or indoor areas (additional breaks may be needed)
- provision of long-sleeved shirts and long pants that are loose fitting, lightweight clothing for air movement and sun protection
- changes to work schedules that allow heavy work to occur during cooler times of the day (this may also coincide with the times when UV radiation is less intense, such as early in the morning or later in the afternoon)
- relocating tasks either indoors or under shade
- the use of more people and rotation of workers between cooler, shaded tasks and hot outdoor work.

Refer to **Safe Work Australia**, or your state or territory WHS authority for more information on heat illness and heat discomfort.





# Protecting your workers.

When it comes to health, prevention is far better than cure. In consultation with health and safety representatives and workers, employers should identify UV exposure hazards, and introduce control measures to reduce exposure.

Cancer Council recommends workplaces have a comprehensive sun protection program in place that includes:

- sun protection control measures—the introduction and maintenance of protective measures in line with workplace hazard controls
- training workers to work safely in the sun—the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision for workers
- risk assessments—periodic assessment of the UV exposure risk to all workers
- sun protection policy—documentation of the program, including control measures, in a written policy
- monitoring program effectiveness—a process to determine the effectiveness of control measures and identify changes that may further reduce exposure.

*“Even though darker skin offers some natural protection against solar UV radiation, those people are still not immune to developing skin cancers. Employers need to make sure that all workers take precautions in protecting themselves from solar UV radiation.”*

— Rick Tinker, Section Manager  
Assessment and Advice, ARPANSA, 2018

## MAKING A CASE FOR SUN PROTECTION: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ Form a small working party. Seek representatives from across the organisation to investigate, plan, develop and guide implementation of your sun protection program. Health and safety representatives should be involved in the working party.
- ✓ Research the issue in your organisation. Collect data and information on numbers of workers at risk, compensation claims for sun-related injuries, incidence of sunburn, and what similar organisations and industries are doing. Clarify your duty of care and legal obligations.
- ✓ Consult workers and their representatives. Ask their opinions and needs, and conduct surveys and interviews with workers to learn more about attitudes, awareness of the issue and current behaviour in regard to sun protection.
- ✓ Design your sun protection program. Use the recommendations in this booklet to design the program and write your policy (see policy template at the back of this booklet). Circulate the draft to seek feedback and approval.
- ✓ Establish a budget to develop and implement the program. Associated costs might include new signage, UV safety training for staff, provision of UV protective PPE such as hats and sunscreen etc.
- ✓ Officially launch the program so all workers are aware of its existence. Use newsletters and websites to publicise the program as widely as possible.
- ✓ Document the process. Keep a written record of what has been undertaken and the results of all actions. This will provide valuable information to review the program and policy later, and identify possible reasons for success or failure.

*Note: Go to the back of this book for a sample sun protection policy and other resources to assist you with implementing a workplace UV protection policy. Contact your local Cancer Council for additional resources and sun protection support.*

## Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a step in the hazard management process used to identify:

- workers who are exposed to UV
- situations or work systems where exposure to UV occurs.

## Factors affecting levels of UV exposure

Total exposure to UV during outdoor jobs depends on factors such as:

- geographical location of the job
- time of year when outdoor work occurs
- times of the day when outdoor work occurs
- pattern and length of exposure—exposure can occur in an ongoing episode or via a series of shorter episodes which add up over the day. Workers who spend all day outdoors are advised to use sun protection at all times, even when the UV level is low
- availability and use of control measures
- presence of reflective surfaces
- presence of photosensitisers.

*Note: Refer to the Risk Assessment Tool at the back of this booklet.*

**Remember: For the best protection from UV damage, use a combination of sun protection measures to include a hat, sunglasses, covering clothing, shade and sunscreen.**

## Sun protection measures

Once the risk has been assessed, employers and workers should work together to minimise the risk.

A comprehensive sun protection program should include the introduction of protective measures in line with workplace hazard controls, including:

- engineering controls, which are measures that reduce exposure to UV by a physical change to the work environment
- administrative controls, which are measures that reduce exposure to UV by a change in work procedure and the way work is organised
- personal protective equipment and clothing, which are measures that reduce exposure to UV radiation by providing a personal barrier between individual workers and the hazard



## Engineering controls

Providing shade, modifying reflective surfaces and using window tinting on vehicles are all examples of engineering controls that reduce workplace exposure to direct and indirect sources of UV radiation.

### Provide shade

Shade is one of the most effective forms of sun protection for outdoor workers and can reduce 50 per cent of direct UV. Shade can come naturally from trees and shrubs, or artificially from permanent or portable structures, which can be easily erected and adapted to suit different types of equipment and worksites.

Although some forms of shade can initially be expensive, the cost and health benefits are long term. Even if it is difficult for work to occur in the shade, provision should be made for shade during breaks, especially lunch breaks.

When considering shade options to protect workers from UV, keep in mind the following:

- The quality of shade from natural sources such as vegetation depends on the density of the foliage, the size of the canopy, the shape of the vegetation and how far the canopy is from the ground.

- Choose shade that blocks as much of the sky as possible to minimise reflection of UV off other surfaces and under the shade.
- There are different types of shade materials. Look for shade fabric that has a UVE (Ultraviolet Effectiveness) rating of 95+ per cent for 'most effective' protection.
- In general, the larger the structure that is providing shade, the more protection provided.
- Position under the shade is important. Levels of UV are greater near the edge of shaded areas than at the centre.
- UVE ratings for shade apply to shade fabrics only. The overall protection provided also depends on the design of the structure itself, its placement relative to the sun and how it is used.
- Portable shade offers limited protection. It can provide a quick and cheap solution to shade small numbers of people, and is ideal for places where no other shade options are available. Position the portable shade to allow occupants to work away from the sides and/or openings.
- Existing shade at the worksite, such as buildings, trees and other structures, may provide shade for workers. Look to relocate jobs to take advantage of existing shade if possible.



**You can never rely on shade alone. A person working in the shade may still receive a substantial amount of exposure from indirect sources of UV such as reflection from nearby surfaces. Always combine shade with personal sun protection measures (hats, covering clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses).**

### Modify reflective surfaces

Some ground and building surfaces reflect UV radiation.

MATERIAL	LEVEL OF REFLECTED SOLAR UVR (%)
Grasslands	0.8-1.6
Lawn	2.0-5.0
Open water	3.3
Soil, clay/humus	4.0-6.0
Asphalt—new black roadway	4.1
Wood, wood boat deck	6.6
Wet beach sand	7.1
Open ocean	8.0
Asphalt—old grey roadway	8.9
Fibreglass boat deck	9.1
Concrete, footpath	8.2-12.0
Dry beach sand	15.0-18.0
White house paint	22.0
Sea surf/white foam	25.0-30.0
Snow old/new	50.0-88.0

**Table 3:** Level of reflected solar UV (%) of different materials.

**Source:** Safe Work Australia. *Guide on Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR)*, August 2013.

When considering changes to reduce exposure to indirect UV radiation from reflective sources, keep in mind the type and colour of the surface reflects the UV differently. As a rule of thumb, surfaces that reflect glare well will also reflect UV well. Consider:

- surface type—soft and rough, or natural surfaces (e.g. grass, soil) reflect less UV than hard and/or smooth surfaces (e.g. snow, white house paint)
- colour—bright colours reflect more UV. Direct UV exposure can be reduced by simply painting a surface a darker colour.

### Consider window tinting

Clear or tinted films applied to the side windows can substantially reduce the amount of UV transmitted into a vehicle. The level of protection varies with different products, so check with the product supplier.

Applying films and tints will only be effective if the windows are closed, so air conditioning of vehicles may also be required to keep vehicles cool. See [Page 12](#) for more information on UV and glass.

Check with the **Window Film Association of Australia and New Zealand** website or your state government department that manages vehicle services for guidelines and specifications on window tinting your vehicle.

## Administrative controls

An effective way to protect workers is to encourage them to minimise the amount of time spent working in the sun, particularly during the middle of the day, when UV levels are strongest.

### Reschedule outdoor work programs

When considering changes to outdoor work schedules to minimise exposure:

- Plan work routines so outdoor tasks are carried out earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon, when UV levels are lower.
- Plan work routines so indoor or shaded tasks are carried out in the middle of the day, when UV levels are strongest.
- Move outdoor tasks indoors or into shaded areas, where possible.
- Share outdoor tasks and rotate staff so the same person is not always outside for long periods of time.

**Refer to your state or territory Cancer Council for more information on types of shade, effective shade planning and shade development.**





### Use the SunSmart app and widget

Encourage workers to check the UV level every day. The SunSmart app and widget provide the daily sun protection times for locations across Australia. The maximum UV level is reported for over 200 locations across Australia, so check for the location closest to your worksite. Visit [sunsmart.com.au/app](http://sunsmart.com.au/app) for more information.

To better communicate the UV level to workers, you can:

- Send all workers a daily text message or email reminder of the maximum UV level that day or encourage workers to download the free SunSmart app to check the UV level and set up reminders.
- Embed the SunSmart widget on your intranet. Remind workers to check the maximum UV daily.
- Display a sign showing the daily maximum UV level at key worksite entrance and exit points and on bulletin boards in staff common areas.
- Make sun protection reminders during the day.

Calculated maximum UV level and real-time UV levels are available for Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville, Darwin, Alice Springs, Perth, Adelaide and Kingston (Tasmania) as well as Macquarie Island, Casey, Davis and Mawson Australian Antarctic stations from **Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)**. Live UV for these locations is also available on the SunSmart app and widget.

The UV level varies in Australia by location. Get the UV forecast for your area from the weather section of some newspapers; websites, including SunSmart, MyUV, UV Daily, Cancer Council, and Bureau of Meteorology (BOM); and apps, including the SunSmart app, BOM weather app.

## Personal protective equipment and clothing

The use of personal protective equipment and clothing (PPE) with regard to sun protection includes provision and use of:

- sun-protective work clothing
- sun-protective hats
- sunglasses or UV protectant safety glasses
- sunscreen.

When choosing sun protection PPE, consider the type of outdoor work being performed. The design must balance sun protection with the need to stay cool in hot conditions.

Workers must be trained in the correct use of all PPE. It is important that design or usage does not create a secondary hazard, such as loose clothing becoming caught in machinery. Sun protection PPE should always be used in combination with other control measures where possible.

## Sun-protective work clothing

One of the most effective barriers between skin and the sun is clothing. The overall protection provided by clothing depends both on the material from which it is made and the design.<sup>7</sup>

When selecting sun-protective clothing for outdoor workers, keep in mind:

- Different types of fabric provide different protection. Closeness of weave, colour and condition can affect the ability of material to absorb UV.
- Fabrics may carry a swing tag with a UPF rating. These fabrics have been tested to determine how effective they are at blocking UV. The higher the UPF rating, the more protection provided. UPF50+ provides excellent all-day protection. Fabrics that do not carry a UPF rating do not necessarily offer less protection. It just means they haven't been tested for sun protection.
- The clothing should cover as much skin as possible. Long pants and shirts with a collar and long sleeves provide the best coverage.
- Keeping cool is also important. Specially designed work clothing is now available that is lightweight and cool, yet still provides maximum sun protection. In the heat, it is important that garments draw perspiration away from the body to help the body stay cool.

When selecting sun-protective clothing when working in hot conditions, you should:

- Choose medium to dark fabric colours as they absorb more UV than light colours and are cooler than black. A UPF50+ will guarantee protection, regardless of colour.
- Choose long sleeves and long pants, as they offer the best protection. Short sleeves or shirts are not recommended.
- Choose a shirt made with a high percentage of natural fibre (e.g. cotton, wool, bamboo), because it's more comfortable than synthetic materials.
- Look for shirts with lots of well-placed venting, but not large amounts of mesh where the UV can penetrate to the skin beneath. Armpit vents are okay as they are unlikely to be exposed to direct UV.
- Replace clothes once the material becomes worn as thin material will allow sunlight through.
- Look for ripstop fabrics, such as nylon, as they are both lightweight and hard wearing.





## Sun-protective hats

A sun-protective hat is one that shades the face, head, ears and neck. As with clothing, the overall protection provided depends on the material from which the hat is made, together with the design.

When selecting sun-protective hats for your outdoor workers, you should:

- Choose a hat with a UPF50+ rating. As with clothing, hats will carry a swing tag if the material has been tested to determine how effectively it blocks UV. If it does not have a UPF rating, choose a hat with a tight weave—if you can see through the hat material, the UV will get through.
- Choose a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire-style hat for best protection. Research has shown that broad-brimmed and bucket hats provide the most sun protection for the face and head. Legionnaire hats provide satisfactory sun protection and are more suitable when work involves a lot of bending.
- Avoid baseball caps as they do not provide adequate protection from UV. Baseball caps are not recommended as they leave most of the face, neck and ears unprotected as demonstrated in *Figure 7*.
- Look for broad-brimmed hats with a brim of at least 7.5cm.
- Look for bucket hats with a deep crown, which sit low on the head and have an angled brim of at least 6cm.
- Look for legionnaire-style hats with a flap that covers the neck. The side of the flap should meet with the peak to provide protection to the side of the face.
- Improve the sun protection of hard hats and helmets with attachable brims and neck flaps.
- Use hats in combination with other forms of sun protection, and keep them on even when in the shade. A broad-brimmed hat can reduce UV exposure to the eyes by 50 per cent. Team with protective eyewear for best protection.



*Figure 7: Example of the sun protection offered by a broad-brimmed hat compared with the lack of protection from a baseball cap.*

ULTRAVIOLET PROTECTIVE FACTOR	CLASSIFICATION	MINIMUM LEVEL OF UV PROTECTION (%)
15	Minimum	93.3
30	Good	96.7
50, 50+	Excellent	98

*Table 4: Ultraviolet protective factor ratings and protection categories for clothing, including hats and gloves.*

*Source: Standards Australia. 2017. Australia/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4399 Sun protective clothing—Evaluation and classification.*

**DID YOU KNOW ?**

The darkness of the lens should not be used to gauge protection from UV radiation. Some clear lenses may provide maximum protection from UV radiation, although a tint is desirable to reduce glare. In fact, it is possible to get clear or lightly-tinted safety glasses that provide high levels of UV protection.

Refer to your state or territory Cancer Council or **ARPANSA** for more information on what to look for when choosing sun-protective clothing and hats.

## Sunglasses and protective eyewear

Sunglasses can provide excellent protection for the eyes. The overall protection provided depends on the protective qualities of the lens, as well as the design of the sunglasses. Safety glasses should offer impact protection as well as UV protection. Look for tinted safety glasses or those marked “O” for outdoor use.

Given the sensitivity of eyes, it is recommended that eye protection is used at all times outdoors, regardless of the UV level. During overcast conditions or during winter, when glare is less of an issue, consider clear or lightly tinted eye protection that still offers high levels of UV protection.

Wearing a broad-brimmed hat in conjunction with eye protection can further reduce the UV exposure to eyes.

When selecting protective eyewear for your workers, keep in mind that:

- All sunglasses sold in Australia must comply with the sunglass standard AS/NZS 1067 Eye and Face protection—Sunglasses and fashion spectacles.
- The sunglass standard defines five categories of lenses and all sunglasses sold in Australia must be labelled to indicate which category they comply with. Look for the words ‘good UV protection’ on the label or swing tag. Be aware that Category 0 and 1 are fashion spectacles, not sunglasses, and do not offer good UV protection.

- Due to colour or darkness of the lens, some sunglasses must not be used when driving. They will be marked “not suitable for driving and road use” or marked with a car symbol crossed out. Category 4 sunglass lenses should not be used for driving or operating machinery that requires good colour perception, especially in the red, amber and green wavelengths. Situations of extreme sun glare, such as deserts, snow fields and at sea, are exceptions. Category 3 polarised lenses may also be suitable in these circumstances. If your workers are required to operate vehicles, read the label description carefully to ensure sunglasses are suitable for driving.
- Some sunglasses may be labelled with a rating system known as an eye protection factor (EPF). This is a scale from 1–10 which is used to classify how well a lens blocks UV. If a lens has been tested, it may state an EPF rating on the label. Sunglasses with an EPF of 9 and 10 transmit almost no UV. Sunglasses may also be labelled UV 400 (blocking 100 per cent of UV), or state the amount of UV radiation blocked as a percentage.

FILTER CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	USAGE
0 and 1	Light tint sunglasses or fashion spectacles.	Some UV protection. Limited or very limited reduction of sun glare.
2 and 3	General purpose sunglasses.	Good UV protection. Good to high protection against sun glare.
4	Very dark special purpose sunglasses.	Good UV protection. Very high sun glare reduction.

*Table 5: Eye and face protection—categories of sunglasses and fashion spectacles*

*Source: Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1067.1.*



Close-fitting, wraparound-style sunglasses are best. This design stops UV from entering the sides and top of the lenses.

Remember that:

- Polarised lenses reduce glare, which is reflected visible light. Note that polarisation does not block or impact on UV transmission. Check the label for UV protection.
- Eye protectors that comply with Australian Standard AS/NZS 1337 are recommended as these provide at least the same amount of protection against UV radiation as sunglasses, as well as impact protection. Untinted eye protectors marked "O" (for outdoor) also have sufficient UV protection for outdoor use. For specialist safety glasses and filters for protection against artificial and welding UV emissions that also meet the standard for safety glasses, choose ones marked AS/NZS 1338.2.

- Prescription glasses, clear or tinted, are excluded from AS/NZS 1067 but may still provide protection against UV. Workers with prescription glasses or prescription sunglasses should check with their optometrist. Fit-over sunglasses are recommended for use with eyeglasses as they are close fitting and wraparound in style.

See Cancer Council Australia eye protection fact sheet on how to protect eyes from UV at [wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position\\_statements](http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position_statements).

**DID YOU KNOW ?**

There is no need to spend lots of money on sunglasses. Low-cost sunglasses that comply with the Australian sunglass standard may also provide excellent protection from UV.

Refer to your state or territory Cancer Council for more information on sunglasses.



## Sunscreen

Sunscreen should be the last line of defence against UV. Never rely on sunscreen alone. The most effective way to protect yourself is to use a combination of the sun protection measures, including covering clothing, a hat, shade, and sunglasses. Sunscreen should be used on areas of exposed skin, such as the face and hands.

It is important to realise no sunscreen offers 100 per cent protection from UV and application can play a significant role in its effectiveness.

When providing sunscreens as PPE, keep in mind that:

- Sunscreen needs to be applied to clean, dry skin.
- All sunscreen must carry a sun protection factor (SPF) rating. Cancer Council recommends the use of SPF30 (or higher), broad-spectrum and water-resistant sunscreen. Broad-spectrum sunscreen filters both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Workers must be educated on the correct way to apply and use sunscreen.
- Sunscreen should be applied to all exposed skin 20 minutes before going outdoors so that it can be absorbed into the skin properly.
- Regardless of the instructions on the bottle, sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours, or more often if perspiring, swimming or towel drying.
- The average-sized adult should apply at least one teaspoon of sunscreen to each arm, leg, front of body and back of body and head (including the face, ears and neck)—that is, 35ml (or seven teaspoons) of sunscreen for one full body application.

- Any moisturiser or make up should be applied on top of sunscreen.
- Price is not always an indication of quality. Any broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF30 (or higher) rating will, if applied correctly, provide good sun protection.
- Sunscreen should be kept in easily accessible places, such as tearooms, bathrooms and site offices.
- Sunscreen can expire, so always check the expiry date and store in a cool place below 30°C. As work vehicles can get very hot, they are not a good place to store sunscreen. Keep sunscreen in your cooler box instead of the glove compartment of your vehicle. If you notice that it has separated, discontinue use.
- Sunscreen can be bought as a cream, lotion, milk or gel. Aerosol sunscreens are not recommended as it is hard to ensure sufficient sunscreen is applied evenly to the skin. All sunscreens labelled SPF30 (or higher) and broad spectrum work equally well as long as they are applied correctly.
- Some dry-touch sunscreens are available in Australia. These may be a good option for individuals who do not like the feel of wearing sunscreen, or those that work in a dusty environment.
- Lip balms containing SPF30 (or higher) should be used to protect lips. The skin on lips is very thin and a common spot for sun damage and skin cancers.

For more, see the Cancer Council sunscreen factsheet at [wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Fact\\_sheet\\_-\\_Sunscreen](http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Fact_sheet_-_Sunscreen).



Refer to your state or territory Cancer Council for more detailed information on sunscreen.



Cancer Council Australia recommends five simple steps to protect workers from sun damage:



Slip on covering clothing.



Slop on SPF30 (or higher), broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen.



Slap on a broad-brimmed hat.



Seek shade.



Slide on sunglasses.

### CONTROL MEASURES: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ Involve workers in designing and/or selecting suitable sun-protective clothing and hats, sunglasses and sunscreen. Ask workers which styles and types they prefer.
- ✓ Select a manufacturer or supplier which is able to respond to the needs of your industry/workers and design/develop new sun-protective products.
- ✓ Trial new initiatives. Have outdoor workers trial samples of sun protection clothing and equipment and ask for their views. Some workplaces have a timeline to phase in new uniforms.
- ✓ Document feedback. It is particularly important that any feedback, including complaints about changes to clothing or work practices, is documented as soon as it is received.
- ✓ Set an example. Ensure managers and supervisors model the use of all sun-protective behaviour and practices.
- ✓ Train workers in the use of sun-protective PPE. There are many misconceptions about the use of sun protection that can be dispelled when workers are informed.
- ✓ Sun protection in the workplace is more than Slip! Slop! Slap! Seek! Slide! Ensure your workers are aware of all the sun protection control measures available in your organisation and the importance of using each in combination, wherever possible.<sup>20</sup>

## Training workers to work safely in the sun

Raising awareness and providing education and training to safety officers, health and safety representatives, supervisors, outdoor workers and new staff is essential to the success of a workplace sun protection program.

A workplace training program should aim to:

- raise the profile of UV exposure as a health and safety issue
- improve knowledge and understanding of sun protection measures
- dispel common misconceptions about UV and various sun protection measures
- provide new staff with information on sun-protective measures in place within your organisation
- help workers detect the early signs of skin cancer by encouraging them to check their own skin
- provide safety personnel and site supervisors with knowledge to confidently address issues that may arise
- improve sun protection behaviour of workers both 'on' and 'off' the job
- raise workers' awareness about your workplace sun protection program and policy
- demonstrate the commitment of management to providing a safe working environment
- provide a forum for feedback from workers.

Topics should include:

- understanding UV and factors affecting levels of UV
- harmful health effects of exposure to UV
- risk factors for skin cancer
- correct application and use of sun protection measures
- how to check your own skin for skin cancer and what to look for
- what to do if concerned about a suspicious spot.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ Target groups for training include management, health and safety personnel, safety officers, worksite supervisors, at risk workers and new workers.
- ✓ Tailor your training program to meet the ongoing needs of the workplace and workers. Use worker surveys, audit results and checklists to identify needs.
- ✓ Use a variety of training methods and tools, including: tool box talks, guest speakers, introductory or refresher sessions, newsletter articles, poster displays, dissemination of educational brochures and flyers, a health and safety noticeboard, reminders via staff meetings and SMS messages, signage, and pay slip notes.
- ✓ Be creative—use incentive programs, role modelling, family events and competitions to raise awareness about the issue. Try a SunSmart worker of the month or SunSmart team of the week award. Remember, colleagues with a personal experience to share can be powerful advocates for sun protection.



### DID YOU KNOW ?

The Australian Taxation Office has recognised the importance of sun protection for outdoor workers, with tax deductions available for sunscreen, hats and sunglasses. Visit [ato.gov.au](http://ato.gov.au) for further information.

Refer to your state or territory Cancer Council for resources, advice and services to help with the design and delivery of education and training for workers.

## A workplace UV protection policy

A UV protection policy should record in writing why and how the UV risk is to be managed by your workplace.

The policy should include the following key elements:

- description of the hazard and key reasons for the policy
- details of UV protection control measures to action
- details of education and training requirements
- an outline of who is responsible for implementation and monitoring
- procedures for reporting UV-related injuries and for managing non-compliance
- details of review processes.

(Refer to [Page 33](#) for a sample UV protection policy.)

### DEVELOPING A POLICY: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ Decide if your organisation needs a new policy or if an existing policy or procedure can be modified to incorporate UV protection.
- ✓ Circulate drafts of the policy for comment.
- ✓ Include procedures for dealing with feedback, non-compliance, reporting incidents of UV injuries (sunburns) and complaints. Non-compliance with the UV protection policy should be managed, as any other non-compliance issue would be. Use the organisation's standard incident management, refresher training and disciplinary procedures.
- ✓ Ensure management is well informed and confident to deal with questions about the policy and non-compliance.
- ✓ Set realistic timeframes for the implementation of the policy and its ongoing review. Some workplaces designate a period for adjustment before making UV protection equipment compulsory.
- ✓ Provide training to all staff that will be affected by the new policy.
- ✓ Put new reporting procedures in place for UV-related injuries, and communicate to staff.
- ✓ Regularly reassess the risk and review the policy to ensure it remains current.





## Monitoring program effectiveness

When sun protection control measures have been implemented, they must be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis or at least every three years. Employers must also provide supervision to ensure correct use and compliance with control measures.

Where possible, incorporate monitoring of UV protection control measures into existing audit tools used in the workplace, including health and safety inspections, on-site supervisor reports and checklists.

Where monitoring reveals non-compliance, it should be managed, as any other non-compliance issue would be, by using the organisation's refresher training and standard disciplinary procedures.

## Reviewing your UV protection program

It is important to review the success of your UV protection program. This may include:

- Asking staff for comments, concerns or difficulties experienced with the new policy and/or control measures
- Repeating the risk assessment to provide information on changes in UV risk levels and success of UV protection control measures
- Examining results of monitoring processes to identify behaviour changes in regards to UV protection and the extent of compliance with control measures
- Repeating worker surveys to identify changes in attitudes and awareness of the issue.<sup>22</sup>

### MONITORING AND REVIEW: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ Monitor the program and the use of control measures closely in the first 12 months.
- ✓ Establish a system for collecting regular and ongoing feedback from workers. Try surveys, focus group interviews and worker quizzes.
- ✓ Ensure feedback is documented and considered when making changes.
- ✓ Consult with workers and their representatives prior to making changes.
- ✓ Once established, review the program and policy on a regular basis, or at least every three years.
- ✓ Use information gathered during monitoring processes to inform training needs.

# Health surveillance and skin cancer.

## Should I organise skin checks in my workplace?

Cancer Council Australia recommends employers, as part of work health and safety responsibilities, focus their attention on the introduction and maintenance of effective sun protective control measures—including education and the importance of early detection—over skin cancer screening programs.

It is important to note that there is no Government-funded screening program in Australia to detect either melanoma or non-melanoma skin cancer, as there is no evidence that such screening is effective.<sup>21</sup> The majority (55–70 per cent) of melanomas are detected by patients themselves, or by their partners and not during a skin check with a health professional. Given this, it is very important to know how to check one's own skin.<sup>22,23,24</sup>

Cancer Council encourages people to become familiar with their own skin, including skin not normally exposed to the sun, and consult a doctor if they notice anything unusual; a change in shape, colour or size of a lesion; or the development of a new spot.

People at high risk of developing skin cancer—including those who work outdoors—should consult their doctor about developing a surveillance program.

Employers should encourage workers to examine their own skin instead of providing in-house skin check programs. If skin checks are provided at work, employers should ensure that workers know that they also need to check their own skin in between workplace checks and to go to their doctor as soon as possible if they notice anything changing.

**Note:** See the Appendices 5 and 6 for two sample letters to workers. One explains why skin checks are not being provided by the employer due to concerns regarding lack of evidence regarding workplace skin check and complacency to check their own skin. The second explains that despite skin checks being provided, the employee must still check their own skin in between workplace skin checks.<sup>23</sup>

Early diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer relies heavily on early detection, with an emphasis on self-examination.

Workers should be advised to see their doctor as soon as possible if they notice anything new or unusual or have concerns about their skin.



Melanoma (A), nodular melanoma (B), basal cell carcinoma (C), and squamous cell carcinoma (D) are the most commonly diagnosed skin cancer types in Australia.

## Tips for checking your skin

Outdoor workers should regularly look at their skin for suspicious spots.

It is important that workers know what their skin looks like normally so changes will be noticed.

Tips on how to check your skin:

- Check your whole body, including areas not normally exposed to the sun, such as the soles of your feet, between your toes, your armpits, ears, eyelids, under your fingernails and scalp.
- Use a hand-held mirror or have someone help you to check areas you cannot see, such as your back, back of your neck and legs.
- Look for a new spot or a spot that is different from the ones around it.
- Look for a sore that doesn't heal.
- Look for a spot or mole that has changed in size, shape or colour.
- Use the information found in the educational material from state and territory Cancer Councils for pictures and descriptions of skin spots to watch.



Refer to Cancer Council Australia's position statement on screening and early detection of skin cancer at [cancer.org.au](https://www.cancer.org.au).

## Workplace medical checks and skin cancer

Cancer Council Australia recommends workplaces focus their health surveillance activities on encouraging workers to examine their own skin and providing information to promote the key early detection messages outlined on [Page 27](#). However, some workplaces may want to provide skin cancer checks within their regular medical examination activities.

The decision to provide a skin cancer check service for workers should be carefully considered as:

- Skin cancer can grow quickly. There is a danger workers will come to rely on skin cancer checks provided by their workplace and therefore not check their own skin and thus fail to notice a skin cancer that appears in the interim.
- A focus on skin cancer checks may result in workers becoming complacent about the use of sun protection control measures to prevent skin cancer.
- The experience and expertise—and therefore quality—of skin check service providers vary.
- An employer's legal obligations may not be met by providing skin checks unless there is a clear emphasis on workers knowing how to regularly examine their own skin.
- If skin cancer checks are conducted on a voluntary basis, early detection messages, if delivered, will not reach workers who choose not to attend.

Cancer Council does not operate, recommend or endorse any skin check services or clinics. If your organisation decides to provide a skin cancer check for workers, it is important to ensure the medical practitioner conducting the checks has expertise and training in skin cancer.

The medical practitioner or skin check service provider should:

- Identify workers at high risk such as those with a family history of skin cancer, workers with fair skin that burns rather than tans, workers who are aged 50 or over, workers who have solar keratoses ('sun spots').
- Always promote the complete early detection message (see above for key early detection messages for workers).
- Always encourage workers to get to know their own skin so changes will be noticed.
- Stress the importance of workers checking their skin regularly throughout the year and not relying on workplace medical checks alone to detect skin cancer.
- Provide information on how to check for skin cancer.
- Undertake a full body examination for skin cancer.
- Keep a record of the skin examination, including a body map documenting suspicious spots.
- Remind your workers that prevention is better than cure.

If a skin cancer is suspected:

- Refer the worker to their own doctor or a skin specialist for confirmation of diagnosis and further action.
- Stress to the worker the importance of getting further diagnosis and treatment without delay.
- Ensure workers follow up with referrals and receive diagnosis and treatment.

Remember, all workers should be encouraged, and provided with information, to examine their own skin whether they attend a workplace skin cancer check or not.

Everyone should regularly check their skin for suspicious spots. It is important that workers know what their skin looks like normally so changes will be noticed early.<sup>25</sup>



# References and contacts.

## Further information and contacts

Cancer Council Australia is Australia's peak cancer control organisation. Its members are the eight state and territory Cancer Councils (see below), which work together to undertake and fund cancer research, prevent and control cancer and provide information and support for people affected by cancer.

People seeking information and advice about cancer and cancer prevention can:

- Call the Cancer Council on 13 11 20
- Visit [cancer.org.au/sunsmart](http://cancer.org.au/sunsmart) or [uvdaily.com.au](http://uvdaily.com.au) for advice on skin cancer and sun protection.

Sun protection products can be purchased at [cancercouncilshop.org.au/](http://cancercouncilshop.org.au/) or from your nearest Cancer Council retail outlet. For more information call Toll Free 1300 354 144.

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Web: [cancercouncil.com.au](http://cancercouncil.com.au)

**Cancer Council Northern Territory**  
Unit 1-3, Casi House  
25 Vanderlin Drive  
CASUARINA NT 0810  
Tel: (08) 8944 1800  
Fax: (08) 8927 4990  
Email: [admin@cancernt.org.au](mailto:admin@cancernt.org.au)  
Web: [nt.cancer.org.au/](http://nt.cancer.org.au/)

**Cancer Council Tasmania**  
15 Princes Street  
SANDY BAY TAS 7006  
Tel: (03) 6169 1900  
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Email: [infotas@cancertas.org.au](mailto:infotas@cancertas.org.au)  
Web: [cancertas.org.au](http://cancertas.org.au)

**Cancer Council Victoria**  
615 St Kilda Road  
MELBOURNE VIC 3004  
Tel: (03) 9514 6100  
Fax: (03) 9514 6800  
Email: [enquiries@cancervic.org.au](mailto:enquiries@cancervic.org.au)  
Web: [sunsmart.com.au/work](http://sunsmart.com.au/work)

**Cancer Council WA**  
Level 1, 420 Bagot Road  
SUBIACO WA 6008  
Tel: (08) 9212 4333  
Fax: (08) 9212 4334  
Email: [questions@cancerwa.asn.au](mailto:questions@cancerwa.asn.au)  
Web: [cancerwa.asn.au](http://cancerwa.asn.au)

**Cancer Council Queensland**  
553 Gregory Terrace  
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006  
Tel: (07) 3634 5100  
Fax: (07) 3257 1306  
Email: [info@cancerqld.org.au](mailto:info@cancerqld.org.au)  
Web: [cancerqld.org.au](http://cancerqld.org.au)

**Cancer Council SA**  
202 Greenhill Road  
EASTWOOD SA 5063  
Tel: (08) 8291 4111  
Fax: (08) 8291 4122  
Email: [cc@cancersa.org.au](mailto:cc@cancersa.org.au)  
Web: [sunsmart.org.au](http://sunsmart.org.au)

For specialist UV advice, UV exposure information and testing services, contact the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA).

**Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency**  
619 Lower Plenty Road,  
YALLAMBIE VIC 3085  
Freecall: 1800 022 333  
Email: [info@arpansa.gov.au](mailto:info@arpansa.gov.au)  
Website: [arpansa.gov.au](http://arpansa.gov.au)

## Explanation of terms and abbreviations

**ARPANSA:** Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, responsible for monitoring live UV radiation levels.

**Carcinogen:** any substance or radiation that can cause cancer.

**Employer:** for the purposes of this resource refers to 'persons conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU), used in health and safety documentation in Australia, which is currently being updated.

**Erythema:** reddening of the skin due to UV radiation exposure, as in sunburn.

**Eye protection factor (EPF):** a measure of the amount of protection against solar UV radiation provided by sunglasses that have been tested in accordance with Australian Standard AS:1067.

**Outdoor worker:** a worker who, in the course of their duties, is required to work outdoors for part or all of the day.

**PPE:** personal protective equipment and clothing.

**SEDs:** Standard Erythema Dose is the unit of measure that describes a dose of UV. One SED per day is considered safe while more than this may cause permanent damage to human skin.

**Skin cancer:** cancer that starts in the cells of the skin. Types include basal cell carcinoma, which starts in the basal cells of the skin; squamous cell carcinoma, which starts in the squamous cells of the skin; and melanoma, which starts in the melanocytes of the skin.

**Solar radiation:** electromagnetic radiation emitted by the sun. At the Earth's surface it consists of visible light, infrared radiation and ultraviolet radiation.

**Solar ultraviolet radiation (solar UV radiation):** the components of ultraviolet radiation emitted by the sun that reach the Earth's surface. It contains radiation in the range 290 to 400 nanometres. Wavelengths in the range 100 to 280 nanometres (all UVC and 90 per cent of UVB) are absorbed in the atmosphere.

**Sunburn:** also known as erythema, an acute skin inflammation caused by overexposure to UV radiation

**Sun protection:** various health and safety issues can arise during outdoor work due to exposure to the sun.

*For the purpose of this booklet, the term sun protection refers to the modification of the work environment or use of equipment or clothing specifically to reduce exposure and protect against solar UV radiation.*

**Sun protection factor (SPF):** a measure of the amount of protection provided by a sunscreen against solar UV radiation. SPF ratings are determined by testing sunscreens on the skin of human volunteers in accordance with Australian Standard AS2604:2012.

**Sun protection times:** the times when UV is forecast to be 3 or higher on a particular day. During these times, sun protection is recommended, including covering clothing, sunscreen, a hat, shade and sunglasses. Sun protection times are forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology.

**Ultraviolet protection factor (UPF):** a measure of the UV radiation protection provided by fabric. UPF ratings are determined by testing fabrics in a laboratory in accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 4399.

**Ultraviolet radiation (UV radiation or UV):** part of the electromagnetic spectrum emitted by the sun. Ultraviolet radiation refers to all ultraviolet radiation in the range 100 to 400 nanometres which can be further classified by wavelength into three regions: UVA, UVB and UVC.

**UVA:** UV radiation in the range 315–400 nanometres

**UVB:** UV radiation in the range 280–315 nanometres

**UVC:** UV radiation in the range 100–280 nanometres

**UV Index:** a number that describes the amount of solar UV radiation that reaches the Earth's surface. The higher the UV Index, the more solar UV radiation present and the greater the potential for skin and eye damage.

**Worker:** covers all staff with a verbal or written contract of employment or training. This includes direct workers, managers or supervisors, group training placements, apprentices, volunteers and work experience students. A worker also includes an independent contractor engaged by the employer, a sub-contractor or a worker of that contractor, or a person whose services are provided to an employer by a labour hire or recruitment agency.



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# Appendix 1.

## A sample UV protection policy for workplaces

This sample sun protection policy is intended as a guide only. Organisations should use aspects to tailor a policy that suits the needs and practicalities of their own organisation.

### (Organisation Name) sun protection policy

#### Rationale

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Despite being an almost entirely preventable disease, at least two in every three Australians will develop skin cancer before they reach the age of 70. Of all new cancers diagnosed in Australia each year, 80 per cent are skin cancers.

Workers who work outdoors for all or part of the day have a higher than average risk of skin cancer. This is because ultraviolet radiation in sunlight or 'UV' is a known carcinogen.

All skin types can be damaged by exposure to UV. Damage is permanent and irreversible and increases with each exposure.

(Organisation Name) has an obligation to provide a working environment that is safe and without risks to health. This obligation includes taking proper steps to reduce the known health risks associated with exposure to UV for outdoor workers.

#### Aims

This policy aims to provide ongoing organisational support to reduce worker exposure to UV by implementing appropriate sun protection control measures.

#### Our commitment

(Organisation Name) will conduct a risk assessment in consultation with health and safety representatives and workers to identify workers who have a high risk of exposure to UV, and work situations where exposure to UV occurs.

(Organisation Name) will reduce workers' exposure to UV by requiring outdoor workers to use sun protection measures at all times. Everybody else is required to use sun protection when outside during daily sun protection times (when UV Index is 3 and above).

(Organisation Name) recognises that supervision of outdoor workers and monitoring of the use of sun protection measures is required to ensure compliance.

(Organisation Name) recognises that standard company grievance procedures will be initiated where a worker fails to comply with sun protective measures.

(Organisation Name) will ensure injury reporting procedures are followed when an incident of sunburn or excessive exposure to UV occurs in the workplace.

(Organisation Name) recognises that a combination of sun protection measures, which includes engineering and administrative controls and personal protective equipment and clothing, provides the best protection to workers from exposure to UV.

#### Management will:

##### Engineering controls

- provide shaded areas or temporary shade where possible
- encourage workers to move jobs where possible to shaded areas
- consider applying window tinting to work vehicles
- modify reflective surfaces where possible
- identify and minimise contact with photosensitising substances
- provide indoor areas or shaded outdoor areas for rest/meal breaks
- consider shade for all outdoor events
- consider shade in plans for future buildings and grounds.



**Administrative controls**

- schedule outdoor work tasks to occur when levels of UV are less intense, such as earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon
- schedule indoor/shaded work tasks to occur when levels of UV are strongest, such as the middle part of the day
- rotate workers between indoor/shaded and outdoor tasks to avoid exposing any one individual to UV for long periods of time
- provide daily access to the UV forecast and sun protection times (available from BOM, SunSmart or ARPANSA)
- adopt sun protection practices during all work-related outdoor social events.

**Personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing**

- provide outdoor workers with the following PPE, covering as much skin as possible, which must be worn when working outdoors, and be chosen in consultation with workers:
  - long-sleeved shirt with a collar made from material with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+
  - long trousers made from UPF50+ material
  - a sun-protective hat that shades the face, head, ears and neck, is made from UPF50+ material, and is in a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style
  - attachable brims and neck flaps when wearing a hard hat
  - broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen and lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher, that is applied generously 20 minutes before going outdoors so that it can be absorbed, and reapplied at a minimum of every two hours
  - sunscreen and SPF30 lip balm is stored in a cool place (below 30°C) to prevent deterioration and reduced effectiveness ) (the expiry date on the bottle is checked and adhered to)
  - sunglasses that are close fitting, have a wrap-around style and have an eye protection factor of 9 or 10, or meet Australian Standards (AS/NZS 1067) or safety glasses rated “O” (AS/NZS 1337.1).

**Education and training**

- provide training to workers to educate about the risks of working outdoors and enable them to work safely in the sun
- ensure training is provided as part of induction for new workers
- ensure workers are provided with information to effectively examine their own skin
- inform workers of tax deduction entitlements for sun protective work equipment
- promote sun-protective behaviour in prominent areas as a reminder to staff
- ensure managers and supervisors act as positive role models
- adopt sun protection practices during all company social events
- promote the use of sun protection measures ‘off the job’.

**Workers will:**

- co-operate with all measures introduced by management to minimise the risks associated with exposure to solar UV
- comply with instructions and advice in regards to the use of sun protection control measures
- participate in sun protection education programs
- act as positive role models
- be responsible for their own sun-protective practices at work
- report incidents of UV overexposure, including sunburn of the skin and photokeratitis of the eye.

*This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, or at least every three years. Policy changes will be communicated to all staff.*

Name (please print): ..... Position: .....

Signature: ..... Date: ..... Date of next policy review: .....

# Appendix 2.

## Toolbox talk:

### UV safety and skin cancer

#### KEY MESSAGES

- Working outdoors exposes you to up to 10 times more ultraviolet (UV) radiation than indoor workers.
- If you regularly work outdoors, protection is recommended all year round, regardless of UV level.
- Both employers and workers share a ‘duty of care’ to reduce workplace exposure to UV radiation.
- Where possible, move tasks indoors or in the shade and take breaks in the shade, particularly in the middle of the day when UV is highest.
- Wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect yourself from the sun: long sleeved shirt with a collar and long pants, a broad-brimmed hat or a hard hat attachment, sunscreen and sunglasses or safety glasses that meet the Australian Standard.
- Check all of your skin regularly—not just sun-exposed skin.
- See your GP immediately if you notice a new or changing spot.

#### WHY SHOULD YOU CARE

- More than 2,000 Australians die from skin cancers every year, but most skin cancers can be prevented. To put it in perspective, more people die from skin cancer than on our roads each year.
- If your job is outdoors, you are exposed to a lot of UV at work. Outdoor workers get up to 10 times more UV exposure than indoor workers.
- UV radiation also causes serious damage to your eyes, as well as dryness, wrinkling and premature ageing of your skin.

#### RISK FACTORS Ask: “Who is at risk of getting skin cancer?”

**Almost all (95 per cent) skin cancers are caused by UV damage. Anyone can get skin cancer, but your risk is higher if you:**

- work outdoors
- have fair skin that burns easily
- have many moles on your skin
- have a history of bad sunburn
- have had a skin cancer already or have a family history of skin cancer
- spend a lot of time outdoors, unprotected
- sun tan, use/have used solariums

#### UV RADIATION Ask: “What is UV?”

- UV radiation is a form of energy that comes from the sun and some artificial sources (e.g. sunbeds).
- We can feel the temperature and see the sun’s light, but we can’t see or feel UV radiation.
- UV can be high on cool or cloudy days, so don’t be fooled.
- To check what the UV level is, check with the Bureau of Meteorology or the free SunSmart app.
- Sun protection is recommended for most people from a UV level of 3. However, if you work outdoors you get regular UV exposure and should use sun protection everyday to stop UV damage adding up over time.



## LEGISLATION

UV radiation is a known cause of workplace injury and disease.

Therefore, in meeting health and safety requirements, all businesses employing outdoor workers should address UV radiation as a workplace hazard and develop and implement control measures (including PPE) to ensure that workers are protected.

Workers also have a responsibility to take care of their own health and complying with reasonable health and safety policies in relation to UV protection.

REDUCE THE RISK  
Ask: "How could you reduce your exposure to UV radiation while working outdoors?"

To reduce risk wherever possible, you can:

- work under shade—trees, or portable and permanent shade structures
- move the job indoors
- plan work so that outdoor tasks are scheduled earlier in the morning or later in the day
- take breaks indoors or in the shade
- use sun-protective PPE
- move away from or modify reflective surfaces such as water, concrete, sand, glass, roofing iron, and snow
- make sure vehicles have tinted windows.

**Personal protective equipment (PPE):**

**Slip** on a long-sleeved shirt with a collar and trousers ideally made from material with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+.

**Slop** on broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen and lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going out in the sun and reapply every two hours.

**Slap** on a hat that shades the face, head, ears and neck. It should be broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style (caps do not protect your neck and ears). Wear attachable brims and neck flaps when wearing a hard hat.

**Seek** shade, particularly when you take breaks.

**Slide** on wrap-around sunglasses that are close fitting and that meet the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067– category 2, 3 or 4 or safety glasses that meet AS/NZS 1337.1.

GET TO KNOW  
YOUR OWN SKIN

Most skin cancers (including melanoma) can be treated successfully if found early. By getting to know your own skin, you are more likely to notice anything new or different at an earlier stage.

Check your skin regularly and see your GP as soon as possible if you see a:

- new spot
- sore that doesn't heal
- spot that looks different from other spots around it
- spot, mole or unusual freckle that has changed in shape, size, or colour
- any skin spot that you are worried about.

*Adapted with permission from Cancer Council NSW, 2018.*

# Appendix 3.

## Quiz:

### UV as a workplace hazard

Below are some quick questions that cover the information included in the accompanying toolbox talk which can be used to assess the group's understanding of the topic of UV radiation as a workplace hazard.

Question 1	True or false: a high temperature means the level of UV radiation is high?
Answer	False
Feedback	Temperature comes from the amount of infrared (heat) from the sun, not levels of UV radiation. Temperature cannot be used as a guide for when sun protection should be used. The UV can be high even on cool or cloudy days.

Question 2	True or false: even though you can't see UV radiation, you can still feel it?
Answer	False
Feedback	We cannot see or feel UV, which means that it can damage our skin without us knowing. If sunlight feels hot on your skin, it is likely to be infrared radiation which we feel as heat or an earlier sunburn which is now more sensitive to heat.

Question 3	True or false: people who work outdoors for extended periods, near reflective surfaces or at altitude, should use sun protection whenever outdoors?
Answer	True
Feedback	When the UV level is low, damage to our skin happens more slowly. However, because UV damage is permanent and adds up over time, it is recommended that if you work outdoors, sun protection is used at all times, regardless of the UV level.

Question 4	True or false: those who work outdoors receive five to 10 times more sun exposure each year than indoor workers?
Answer	True
Feedback	Outdoor workers are at greater risk of skin cancer because they spend long periods of time exposed to UV, for many years of their working life.



<b>Question 5</b>	<b>True or false: sun protection at any age helps reduce your risk of skin cancer?</b>
Answer	True
Feedback	Sun protection against UV radiation will help to reduce the lifetime risk of skin cancer for all ages because UV damage adds up over time. Every incidence of sun exposure without protection further increases the risk of skin cancer.

<b>Question 6</b>	<b>True or false: a baseball cap provides good protection from UV radiation?</b>
Answer	False
Feedback	A baseball cap might protect your scalp, but fails to provide adequate protection to the face, ears and neck. Suitable hats include broad-brimmed or hard hat attachment, bucket hat or a legionnaire style. Legionnaire hats are similar to a cap but has a flap at the back that provides added protection to the neck and ears.

<b>Question 7</b>	<b>True or false: checking your skin regularly involves self-examination once every year?</b>
Answer	False
Feedback	Some aggressive forms of skin cancer can develop and become very serious within a short period of time (as little as six weeks). Only checking your skin annually puts you at risk of finding a skin cancer at a late stage, reducing your treatment options and potentially affecting the treatment outcome. That is why it is recommended that individuals check their own skin on a regular basis.

<b>Question 8</b>	<b>True or false: Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world; however, it is only a harmless disease that is easy to treat and cure?</b>
Answer	False
Feedback	More than 2,000 people die each year in Australia from skin cancer, 70 per cent from melanoma, and 30 per cent from non-melanoma skin cancers. Not all skin cancers can be treated by removal through surgery. Melanoma can become life-threatening in as little as six weeks if not diagnosed or treated early.

For more information, visit [cancer.org.au/sunsmart](http://cancer.org.au/sunsmart)

## Appendix 4.

### UV risk control for outdoor work

Use this worksheet to assess if there is a risk of hazardous levels of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun associated with performing a role in your organisation.

Work location:	Description of task(s) performed:
Assessed by:	
Health & Safety Representative:	
Date:	

#### 1. UV risk assessment

To assess UV risk, tick the most relevant box for each factor below. Each category adds to the accumulated level of risk; please assess the risk based on the combination of factors.



#### Time of day spent in the sun (including in vehicles without tinting)

<input type="checkbox"/> all day	<input type="checkbox"/> 10am-3pm	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5pm	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-10am	<input type="checkbox"/> after 5pm	<input type="checkbox"/> before 8am	<input type="checkbox"/> at night
----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

#### Altitude of worksite

<input type="checkbox"/> more than 1500m	<input type="checkbox"/> 1000-1500m	<input type="checkbox"/> 500-1000m	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 500m
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#### Season when work takes place

<input type="checkbox"/> all year	<input type="checkbox"/> summer	<input type="checkbox"/> autumn/spring	<input type="checkbox"/> winter
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#### Shade during work

<input type="checkbox"/> no shade	<input type="checkbox"/> partial shade	<input type="checkbox"/> total shade	<input type="checkbox"/> indoor work
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#### Shade at rest breaks

<input type="checkbox"/> no shade/partial shade	<input type="checkbox"/> total shade	<input type="checkbox"/> indoor break area
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#### Latitude (proximity to equator)

<input type="checkbox"/> QLD, NT, northern WA	<input type="checkbox"/> VIC, SA, southern WA, NSW, ACT	<input type="checkbox"/> TAS
---	---	------------------------------



## 2. Assessment of hazardous factors

The presence of reflective surfaces increases the risks posed by UV radiation exposure.

### Photosensitivity:

Certain substances increase sensitivity to UV radiation, meaning sunburn occurs more quickly. Substances that cause photosensitivity include industrial chemicals, drugs, plants, fragrances and some medications.

- check the MSDS to identify substances that cause photosensitivity
- advise workers to consult their GP if taking medication that may cause photosensitivity

### Presence of reflecting substances:

- snow
- sand
- house paint (white)
- concrete
- glass
- roofing iron
- water
- other \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Assessment of protective factors

### Personal protective equipment (PPE) in use:

- portable shade structure
- construction helmet with brim attachment
- broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire-style hat
- shirt with longer sleeves and a collar made from UFP50+ material
- trousers (or knee length shorts) made from UFP50+ material
- sunscreen with SPF30 (or higher)
- wrap-around sunglasses (AS/NZS 1067/EPF of 9 or 10) or safety glasses (AS/NZS 1337.1:2010)

## 4. Identification of risk control measures

### Use of engineering controls

OPTIONS/ACTIONS	✓	X	TIMEFRAME (short/medium/long)
• Use shade (natural, portable, or permanent structures)			
• Modify reflective surfaces or move work away from these surfaces			
• Provide window tinting for work vehicles			
• Other			

### Use of administrative controls

OPTIONS/ACTIONS	✓	X	TIMEFRAME (short/medium/long)
<b>Reschedule outdoor work:</b>			
• Outdoor tasks are done early in the morning or later in the afternoon when levels of UV radiation are lower			
• Shaded work is done in the middle of the day.			
• Move jobs indoors or into shaded areas.			
• Rotate staff and work, so that the same person is not always outside.			
• Supervisors refer to the SunSmart app to check current UV levels for their location. Download the free <b>SunSmart app</b> or check the widget at <a href="https://www.sunsmart.com.au/widget">sunsmart.com.au/widget</a>			

### Use of personal protective equipment and clothing

OPTIONS/ACTIONS	✓	X	TIMEFRAME (short/medium/long)
<b>Clothing:</b>			
• Provide a uniform or require work wear that has long sleeves, long pants and a collar.			
• Use sun-protective fabrics—those with a tight weave or rated with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+ is recommended (AS/NZS 4399).			
<b>Hats:</b>			
• Provide or require the use of a UV-protective hat in legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket style, or attachable brims and neck flaps for hard hats or helmets.			
<b>Sunglasses:</b>			
• Provide or encourage the use of wrap-around sunglasses (AS/NZS 1067 or with an EPF of 9 or 10) or safety glasses (AS/NZS 1337.1).			
<b>Sunscreen:</b>			
• Purchase broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen that is SPF30 (or higher) and make it easily accessible.			
• Encourage staff to apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors, and to reapply it every two hours, and/or if they get wet or perspire.			

# Appendix 5.

## Template letter: for workplaces offering skin checks

This letter template is designed for workplaces to insert on their own letterhead and distribute to workers as part of their workplace sun protection program.

To reduce the risk of outdoor workers developing skin cancer and dying prematurely from skin cancer, workplaces are encouraged to implement an ultraviolet (UV) protection program at work which includes the introduction of UV protection control measures, and regular reminders to staff about checking for skin cancer.

*(Date)*

Dear employee,

**Re: Your skin health**

As an outdoor worker, you are at an increased risk of developing skin cancer. *(Insert name of workplace)* is committed to protecting our workers from overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and subsequent risk of skin cancer.

As per our *(insert policy/guidelines reference here)*, all workers of *(insert name of workplace)* are required to implement the use of sun protection when working outdoors to reduce workplace exposure to solar UV radiation. When working outdoors, always use a combination of sun protection measures including:

- long-sleeved shirt (with sleeves rolled down) and long trousers
- SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen (reapply sunscreen at least two hourly)
- either a broad-brimmed hat (minimum 7.5cm wide brim), legionnaire-style hat or bucket hat (deep crown, minimum 6cm wide brim). Baseball caps are not permitted.
- working and taking rest breaks in the shade wherever possible
- UV protection eyewear that meet AS/NZS 1067 for sunglasses or AS/NZS 1337.1 for safety glasses.

A copy of this *(policy/guideline)* can be accessed via *(insert here)*.

*(Insert name of workplace)* offers workers access to annual workplace skin checks as part of the *(insert name of initiative)*. Although we firmly encourage you to participate in this program and discuss your skin health concerns during your appointment, we encourage you to also have this discussion with your GP. The successful treatment of skin cancer relies heavily on early detection. You are the best person to notice early changes to your skin. *(Insert name of workplace)* and Cancer Council recommend that you become familiar with your own skin, regularly checking your own skin throughout the year, including areas not exposed to the sun such as the soles of your feet, scalp and private areas. This is in addition to the skin screening appointment offered to you by *(insert name of workplace)*.

Look for new or existing spots that have changed in colour, size or shape as skin cancer can develop quickly. This does not require any specific medical knowledge. Visit [cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au) for more information on skin checks. **Please see your GP as soon as possible if you notice any suspicious spots.**

Remember, checking your skin for skin cancer does not protect you from skin cancer. Sun protection needs to be used year-round as a preventative measure.

For more information, please contact *(insert local contact)*, visit [cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au) or phone Cancer Council on 13 11 20.

Regards,  
Human Resources/People and Culture.

# Appendix 6.

## Template letter: for workplaces not offering skin checks

This letter template is designed for workplaces to insert on their own letterhead and distribute to workers as part of their workplace sun protection program.

To reduce the risk of outdoor workers developing skin cancer and dying prematurely from skin cancer, workplaces are encouraged to implement an ultraviolet (UV) protection program at work which includes the introduction of UV protection control measures, and regular reminders to staff about checking for skin cancer.

*(Date)*

Dear employee,

**Re: Your skin health**

As an outdoor worker, you are at an increased risk of developing skin cancer. *(Insert name of workplace)* is committed to protecting our workers from overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and subsequent risk of skin cancer.

As per our *(insert policy/guidelines reference here)*, all workers of *(insert name of workplace)* are required to implement the use of sun protection when working outdoors to reduce workplace exposure to solar UV radiation. When working outdoors always use a combination of sun protection measures including:

- long-sleeved shirt (with sleeves rolled down) and long trousers
- SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen (reapply sunscreen at least two hourly)
- either a broad-brimmed hat (minimum 7.5cm wide brim), legionnaire-style hat or bucket hat (deep crown, minimum 6cm wide brim). Baseball caps are not permitted.
- working and taking rest breaks in the shade wherever possible
- UV protection eyewear that meet AS/NZS 1067 for sunglasses or AS/NZS 1337.1 for safety glasses

A copy of this *(policy/guideline)* can be accessed via *(insert here)*.

Regarding the early detection of skin cancer, *(insert name of workplace)* does not offer an employee skin cancer screening program. Evidence suggests that the successful treatment of skin cancer relies heavily on early detection. You are the best person to notice early changes to your skin. *(Insert name of workplace)* and Cancer Council recommend that you become familiar with your own skin, checking your skin regularly throughout year, including areas not exposed to the sun such as the soles of your feet, scalp and private areas.

Look for new or existing spots that have changed in colour, size or shape as skin cancer can develop quickly. This does not require any specific medical knowledge. Visit [cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au) for more information on skin checks. **Please see your GP as soon as possible if you notice any suspicious spots.**

Remember, checking your skin for skin cancer does not protect you from skin cancer. Sun protection needs to be used year-round as a preventative measure.

For more information, please contact *(insert local contact)*, visit [cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au) or phone Cancer Council on 13 11 20.

Regards,  
Human Resources/People and Culture.







Australian Government  
Australian Radiation Protection  
and Nuclear Safety Agency



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**13 11 20**  
Every minute. Every hour. Every day.  
[cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au)

