

A workplace sun protection program

Work health and safety legislation in each Australian state requires your employer or PCBU (person conducting a business undertaking) to provide a safe working environment.

This legislation also states that, as a worker, you must cooperate with your workplace's sun protection program, so be sure to follow sun safety requirements.

If you work outdoors and your workplace does not offer any sun protection measures, raise the issue with your health and safety representative or manager.

If self-employed, it is in your best interest to look after yourself and use sun protection at work.

Your state or territory Cancer Council may be able to assist your workplace with a sun protection policy, resources and strategies to create a sun safe working environment.

If your job requires you to work outside, tax deductions are available for sun protection products. Talk to your tax advisor or contact the Tax Office by calling 13 28 61 or visiting their website at www.ato.gov.au



Looking out for skin cancer

Skin cancer can be successfully treated if found early. However, skin cancer can be fatal if left untreated.

Outdoor workers should be encouraged to regularly check their skin for suspicious spots. It is important that everyone knows what their skin looks like normally so changes will be noticed. Skin cancer can grow quickly. Check all of your skin, not just sun-exposed areas. If you notice anything unusual, including any change in shape, colour or size of a new spot, or the development of a spot, visit your doctor as soon as possible.

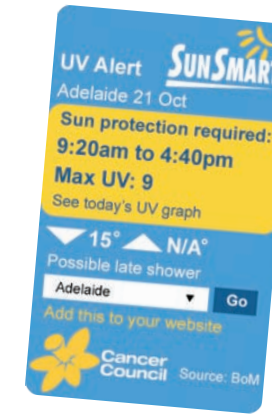
How to check your skin

- Check your whole body, including 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, the 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 does not heal.
- Look for a spot or mole that has changed in size, shape or colour.

See your doctor as soon as possible if you notice anything unusual.



SunSmart UV Alert app



SunSmart UV Alert widget

SunSmart UV Alert widget and app are available from: www.cancer.org.au/uvAlert

 Cancer Council
Helpline
13 11 20
www.cancer.org.au

For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues, call Cancer Council Helpline. This is a confidential service.

If you have communication, hearing or language needs, you can connect with us:

TTY speech and hearing impaired users 133 677

Speak and listen users 1300 555 727

Languages other than English users, call Translating and Interpreter Service 131 450
(then ask for Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20)

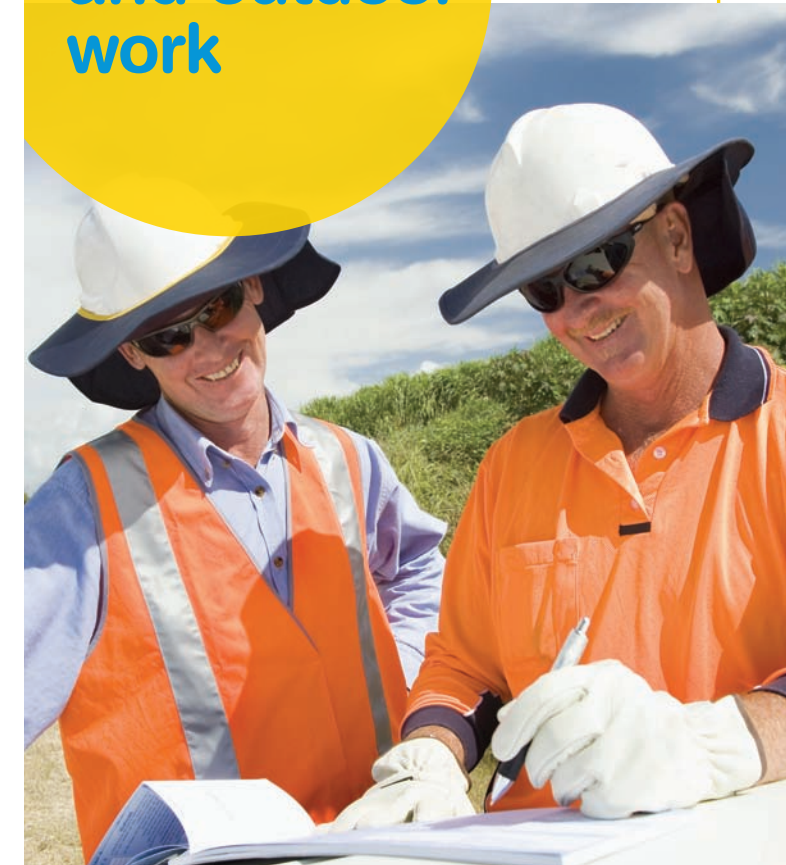
For further information and details please visit our website: www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart

Images courtesy of QLD Health (2006)

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Skin cancer and outdoor work



 **SUNSMART**

A guide for working safely in the sun

Skin cancer in Australia

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. At least two in every three Australians will develop skin cancer before they reach the age of 70.

Our skin cancer rates are high due to Australia experiencing some of the highest levels of ultraviolet (UV) radiation in the world. Even on cool or cloudy days, UV radiation can still be strong enough to damage unprotected skin and eyes.

Are you at risk?

As an outdoor worker, you receive five to ten times more UV radiation exposure than indoor workers, putting you at a high risk of developing skin cancer, including melanoma.

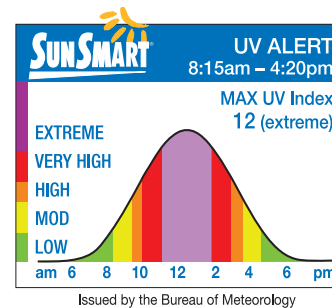
All skin types can be damaged by exposure to UV radiation. Damage is permanent and irreversible and increases with each exposure. Whenever working outdoors it is important to protect your skin and eyes.

When UV radiation reaches 3, unprotected skin is at risk

UV is an invisible source of radiation that cannot be seen or felt. It can damage our skin without us knowing. Sun protection is required when the UV radiation levels reach 3 and above—the level that can damage unprotected skin and increase your risk of skin cancer. However when spending extended periods of time in the sun i.e. working outdoors, sensible sun protection is still recommended regardless of UV levels.

UV levels vary according to your location in Australia. You can find local UV radiation levels using the SunSmart UV Alert and can access this:

- in the weather section of the newspaper
- online at www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv or at www.cancer.org.au
- by downloading:
 - the SunSmart UV Alert app
 - a UV Alert widget for websites



Both are available free at www.cancer.org.au/uvAlert

Getting the right balance of sun and vitamin D

The sun's UV radiation is both a major cause of skin cancer and a great source of vitamin D. For most people, adequate vitamin D levels are reached through regular daily activity and incidental exposure to the sun.

In summer, most people only need a few minutes of sun each day outside peak UV radiation times on the equivalent skin area to that of the face, arms and hands.

During winter, in southern parts of Australia, some people may require a few hours of sunlight to their face, arms and hands spread over each week. In winter in the northern parts of Australia, people will continue to maintain adequate vitamin D levels going about their day-to-day activities, so it is not necessary to deliberately seek UV radiation exposure.

People with naturally dark skin also require more UV radiation exposure to maintain their vitamin D levels. The best way to find out about your vitamin D requirements is to talk with your doctor or find out more at www.cancer.org.au

How to protect your skin

When working outdoors Cancer Council recommends these five simple steps to protect against UV radiation damage.



Slip on some sun-protective work clothing

- ✓ Cover as much skin as possible. Long pants and work shirts with a collar and long sleeves are best.
- ✓ Choose lightweight, closely woven material with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) 50+.
- ✓ Choose loose fitting clothing to keep cool in the heat.



Slop on SPF 30 or higher sunscreen

- ✓ No sunscreen provides complete protection so never rely on sunscreen alone.
- ✓ Choose sunscreen that is broad spectrum and water resistant.
- ✓ Apply sunscreen generously to clean, dry skin 20 minutes before you go outdoors. Apply 1 teaspoon full of sunscreen per limb and ½ a teaspoon for face, neck and ears.
- ✓ Reapply every two hours or more often when sweating.
- ✓ Protect your lips with an SPF 30 or higher lip balm.
- ✓ Always check and follow the use by date on sunscreen.
- ✓ Sunscreen should be stored in a cool dry place (below 30 degrees).



Slap on a hat

- ✓ A hat should shade your face, ears and neck.
- ✓ A broad brimmed styled hat should have a minimum 7.5 cm brim.
- ✓ A bucket style hat should have a deep crown, angled brim of minimum 6 cm and sit low on the head.
- ✓ A legionnaire style hat should have a flap that covers the neck and joins to the sides of the front peak.
- ✓ If wearing a hard hat or helmet use a brim attachment or use a brim and flap attachment (legionnaire style).
- ✓ Baseball caps are not recommended as they do not protect the face, head, neck or ears.



Seek shade

- ✓ Work and take breaks in the shade. Where no shade exists, use temporary portable shade.
- ✓ Plan to work indoors or in the shade during the middle of the day when UV radiation levels are strongest.
- ✓ Plan to do outdoor work tasks early in the morning or later in the afternoon when UV radiation levels are lower.
- ✓ Share outdoor tasks and rotate staff so the same person is not always out in the sun.
- ✓ Choose shade that has extensive overhead and side cover and is positioned away from highly reflective surfaces.



Slide on some sunglasses

- ✓ Be aware that your eyes can also be damaged by the sun's UV radiation so protect the eyes at all times when outdoors during daylight hours.
- ✓ Wear close fitting, wraparound style sunglasses.
- ✓ When buying new sunglasses, check the swing tag to ensure they meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 1067:2003 – category 2, 3 or 4) and are safe for driving.
- ✓ Look for an eye protection factor (EPF) 10.
- ✓ Safety glasses that meet AS/NZS 1337 still provide sun protection.
- ✓ Polarised lenses reduce glare and make it easier to see on sunny days.

Remember to use these five steps together for the best protection.