

Topic Overview	Sun protection and the prevention of skin cancer This toolbox talk covers the laws and safe work methods associated with sun protection and skin cancer prevention.	
Presenter	Expected duration	Date
Objectives	Participants will learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation as it applies to sun protection in the workplace. • Different types of skin cancer and who is at increased risk. • How to reduce the risk of skin cancer when working outdoors. 	
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand you have an increased risk of skin cancer when working outdoors. • Check the SunSmart UV Alert to see if UV levels are 3 or above. • Understand that both businesses 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. • Wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect yourself from the sun (sunscreen, a broad brimmed hat or a helmet with neck flaps, longer-sleeved shirt with a collar and long trousers (long-longs), and sunglasses or safety glasses or protective goggles). • Check your skin regularly and see your GP immediately if you notice any changes. 	
Skin cancer information	Hand out a “Can you spot skin cancer” flyer. There are 3 main types of skin cancer. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Melanoma is the least common but most dangerous form of skin cancer and can spread to other parts of the body. In Australia, more than 11,500 new cases of melanoma are diagnosed every year and over 1,500 people die because of it. 2. Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) – not as dangerous as melanoma but can spread to other parts of the body if not treated. 3. Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) – most common type of skin cancer and the least dangerous. SCC and BCC are called non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC). NMSC is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia with over 430,000 new cases every year.	
Why you should care?	More than 2000 Australians die from melanoma and other skin cancers every year. To put it in perspective, more people die from skin cancer than on our roads each year. The workplace can be a major source of exposure to UV radiation, with outdoor workers receiving between five and ten times more sun exposure than indoor workers.	
Risk factors	ASK: Which people do you think are most at risk of getting skin cancer? Use the following points to promote discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with fair skin, that burns easily, freckles and does not tan, fair hair, blue or green eyes. • People who have many moles on their skin. • People with a history of sunburn. • People with a family history of melanoma and other skin cancers. • Everyone who spends a large amount of time exposed to the sun (not necessarily direct sun) in Australia is at risk of skin cancer – even if you have darker hair and skin. 	
UV radiation	ASK : Do you know what causes skin cancer? Use the following points to promote discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all skin cancers are caused by over exposure to UV radiation. • UV radiation penetrates the skin causing damage to cells below. Skin cancer occurs when these damaged cells begin to grow abnormally and form a tumour. • Spending long periods outside unprotected and/or getting sunburnt increases damage to the skin cells and increases your overall risk of skin cancer. • Unprotected exposure to UV radiation can cause serious damage to your eyes including cataracts and skin cancer of the eyelids and around the eyes. • UV radiation also causes dryness, wrinkling and premature aging of the skin. 	

<p>SunSmart UV Alert Show photo on the next page or your own phone.</p>	<p>The sun gives off infrared radiation, which we feel as heat, visible light that we can see, and UV radiation, which cannot be seen or felt. That means you cannot tell if UV levels are high or low based on the day's temperature. UV levels can be high even on cool or cloudy days. You can check UV levels for your local area with the SunSmart UV Alert. When UV levels are forecast to be 3 and above, the UV rays are strong enough to damage the skin and sun protection is recommended.</p> <p>You can check the UV Alert on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the free SunSmart app for iPhone and Android • daily newspapers, or; • visit cancercouncil/sunsmart.org.au
<p>Legislation</p>	<p>UV radiation is a known cause of workplace injury and disease. Therefore, in meeting WHS legislative requirements all businesses employing outdoor workers should address UV radiation as a workplace hazard and develop and implement control measures (including PPE and long-longs) to ensure that workers are protected. Workers also have a responsibility for taking care of their health and complying with reasonable WHS policies in relation to sun protection.</p>
<p>Reduce the risk</p>	<p>ASK: Can you think of ways to reduce your exposure to UV radiation while working outdoors? Use the following points to promote discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whenever possible work under shade - trees, or portable and permanent shade structures. • Where practical move the job indoors. • Plan work so that outdoor tasks are scheduled earlier in the morning or later in the day. Tasks being worked on in the middle part of the day should be done in the shade. <p>Other ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move away from reflective surfaces such as water, concrete, sand, glass, roofing iron, and snow. • Make sure vehicles have tinted windows.
<p>Reduce the risk Show photo on the next page and discuss</p>	<p>If you cannot avoid working outside in the sun always use appropriate PPE and reduce your risk of UV exposure in other ways.</p> <p>ASK: What is appropriate PPE to reduce your risk of exposure to UV radiation? Use the following points to promote discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slip on long-longs made from material with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+. Make sure the material is lightweight to keep you cool in the heat. • Slop on broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 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 (for example during your breaks). • Slap on a sun-protective 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). Or wear attachable brims and neck flaps when wearing a hard hat. • Seek shade, particularly when you take your breaks. • Slide on wrap-around sunglasses that are close fitting and that meet the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067:2003 – category 2, 3 or 4 or safety glasses that meet AS/NZS 1337, 1:2010
<p>Checking your skin</p>	<p>The good news is that most skin cancers (including melanoma) can be treated successfully if diagnosed and treated early.</p> <p>Get to know your own skin.</p> <p>By getting to know your own skin, you are much more likely to notice anything new or different. Check your skin every three months and see your GP as soon as possible if you see a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new spot that wasn't there before • sore or lesion 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, or; • any skin spot that you are worried about.
<p>Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the work environment and facilities: Code of Practice (WorkCover NSW). • Guidance note for the protection of workers from the Ultraviolet radiation in Sunlight (2008) SafeWork Australia. • Free SunSmart app for iPhone and Android. • Can you spot a skin cancer resources. • Skin cancer and outdoor workers pamphlet. • Workplace sun protection information: cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart



Good protection: helmet with neck flap, wraparound sunglasses & long-sleeved clothing. (Image courtesy of Queensland Health)



Download free [SunSmart app](#) to your phone and check each day.

UV Index

11+	Extreme
8,9,10	Very High
6,7	High
3,4,5	Moderate
1,2	Low

Sun protection is generally not needed unless outside for extended periods.

5 ways to protect yourself

- Slap on sun-protective clothing
- Slap on SPF30+ sunscreen. Apply every 2 hours
- Slap on a broad brimmed hat
- Slide on wrap-around glasses
- Seek shade

Need sun protection if the UV levels are 3 or over.

Need more help?

e: sunsmart@nswcc.org.au f: (02) 8302 3529 SunSmart Infoline: (02) 9334 1761
 w: cancerCouncil.com.au/reduce-risks/sun-protection/local-government-workplace
 Skin Cancer Prevention Unit Cancer Council NSW PO BOX 572 Kings Cross NSW 1340

