

# SUN SAFETY TOOL KIT FOR OUTDOOR WORKERS

## Sun Protection Policy Development Guide

Skin cancer is considered epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over one million Americans are expected to get skin cancer this year. That's more people than the grand total of all who will get cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, and colon. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight causes 90 percent of all non-melanoma skin cancer. Risk for skin cancer can be greatly reduced when certain precautions are practiced.

It is prudent for safety staff to establish a sun safety policy to protect employees from excessive sunlight and to avoid potential liability and litigation stemming from employees experiencing blistering sunburns, dehydration, heat illness, and skin cancer. This document is designed to assist safety personnel as they create sun-protection guidelines for their specific setting.

Some statements presented in this sample policy may prove impractical and may need to be modified or totally omitted from the guidelines administrators develop. The goal is to adopt as many of the sun-safety principles and strategies as possible, according to their feasibility.

Below are strategies for preventing skin cancer. The next page is a policy template the safety committee can use to guide an organizational sun safety policy.

### Strategies for Preventing Skin Cancer

1. Reduce exposure to sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (10 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the winter), as practical.
2. Wear full-coverage clothing when outside in sunlight including four-inch full-brimmed hats, long-sleeve shirts, and full-length pants (weather permitting).
3. Use sunglasses with 99-100 percent UVA and UVB protection. A UV protective coating can be added to prescription glasses.
4. Apply full-spectrum (UVA & UVB) sunscreen - SPF 30 or higher - to exposed skin, 15 minutes before going outside in the sun and reapply at least every 2 hours.
5. Use lip balm with a SPF of 30 or higher.
6. Seek shade when the UV Index is over 5.

UV Index: The UV Index predicts the concentration of ultraviolet radiation that will hit the indicated zip code area on a given day. The higher the number, the stronger UV rays will be. This index can be daily communicated to outdoor workers to remind them to take sun-protection precautions. You can use the UV Index to take appropriate sun-protective behaviors and avoid overexposure to UV radiation.

OSHA Publications Office provides a pocket card entitled "Protecting Yourself in the Sun." Download in English: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3166.pdf> or Spanish: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3168.pdf> or order at [www.osha.gov/publications](http://www.osha.gov/publications) or call (202) 693-1888 Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (EST).

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Adopted from the Canadian Dermatology Association: TEMPLATE FOR A SUN SAFETY POLICY and PROGRESS TRACKER ©



## *(Name of Organization)* Sun Safety Policy

*(Name of organization)* is interested in providing a safe working environment for our employees.

*(Name of organization)* is committed to the health and safety of our workers. *(Name of organization)* acknowledges that ultraviolet (UV) radiation through sun exposure may have damaging effects on our employees working outdoors.

By instituting this policy, we hope to provide a comprehensive approach to protection from UV radiation from the sun. Through this policy, we plan to:

- reduce UV exposure; and
- improve sun protection during unavoidable sun exposure.

The strategies we will adopt to support this goal are:

- integrate sun safety measures into the employee or operations manual
- check the UV Index and notify foremen/supervisors when the Index is over 5 to have outdoor workers take extra sun safety precautions throughout the day
- rotate workers between work sites or site locations so they are not all exposed to the sun during the period of greatest UV intensity between 11 am and 4 pm
- provide free SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum sunscreen and lip balm to all outdoor workers from April to September
- provide annual allowance of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to purchase sun-safety items, such as, wide-brim hats, UV-protective sunglasses, sunscreen, lip balm, etc.
- if possible, schedule outdoor work outside of the peak midday hours of 12 noon and 2 pm
- erect shade structures at all locations for use during coffee and lunch breaks; and
- promote sun safety education throughout our organization and at orientation for new and seasonal staff.
  - Communicate and reinforce sun safety guidelines to employees through verbal reminders, posters, signs, pamphlets, newsletters, etc.

*(Name of organization)* will conduct an annual review of the company's sun safety policy and the degree to which employees practice skin cancer prevention behaviors.

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