



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

DEPARTMENT: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

SUBJECT: SUN SAFETY

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Sun Safety

Sun safety education for state employees.

1. Any state employee who spends more than a total of five hours per week outdoors shall be provided information about (a) the potential dangers of diseases caused by over-exposure of the sun, such as skin cancer, (b) the existence of available protections and their proper uses, and (c) any other information necessary to afford an employee his or her best opportunity to protect themselves from the sun.

2. An employer of any employee subject to subdivision one of this section shall ensure that any necessary information is given to each employee for his or her use during their employment, at no cost to the employee.

3. The commissioner, in consultation with the commissioner of education, shall determine the form and content of the information supplied to the state employees who are subject to the provisions of this section.

Information

Excessive exposure to the sun and other sources of ultraviolet (UV) radiation is clearly associated with a higher risk of multiple forms of [skin cancer](#). Since skin cancer is diagnosed in over one million Americans every year (and rising), experts from the American Cancer Society,

the National Cancer Institute, the American Academy of Dermatology, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, and many other organizations are unanimous in strongly recommending that you should reduce your time in the sun.

That sounds simple, but how much sun is too much? Who is most at risk? What are the most effective ways to protect yourself? Here are answers to frequently asked questions about sun safety.

Am I at risk for skin cancer?

People of all races and skin colors can develop skin cancer, but some are more susceptible than others. If you have one or more of the following risk factors, you should be especially vigilant about reducing your UV exposure:

- Fair skin
- Blue, green, or hazel eyes
- Blond or red hair
- Freckles
- Moles (especially 50 or more)
- Family or personal history of skin cancer

When and where is the sun most dangerous?

UV radiation from the sun is especially damaging under certain conditions, including the following:

- from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- from mid-Spring through mid-Fall
- when there is no thick cloud cover (and clouds only block 20% of UV rays)
- near water, snow, or other highly reflective surfaces

Sun damage accumulates over time, so if you find yourself in these conditions often, consistent protection is a must. Remember that besides skin cancer, the sun can also cause cataracts and other eye problems, a weakened immune system, unsightly skin spots, wrinkles, and "leathery" skin.

What is the most effective way to protect myself?

Three different types of skin cancer are linked to sunlight exposure. Both basal cell cancer (the most common) and squamous cell cancer are usually treatable and totally cured if caught in time. Malignant melanoma is rarer, but also more likely to be fatal if treatment is delayed. Most of the 10,000 Americans who die from skin cancer each year are victims of malignant melanoma. The risk of developing skin cancer increases with the amount of time over the years you spend without protection in the sun and the intensity of the sun's rays during exposure. Work surfaces, such as metal roofing, concrete, etc., can also reflect up to 50 percent of the sun's radiation which intensifies exposure.

How can you reduce your risk to UV exposure?

The easiest way to reduce UV risk is to reduce your direct exposure to the sun. You can do this by wearing protective clothing, such as a brim hat, long pants and long sleeved shirt.

In addition to reducing your exposure, examine yourself regularly. Check your skin for danger signs, including any wound, sore or patch of skin that won't heal or constantly scales or any growing lump, particularly if it is brown or bluish in color. Also check for moles that grow, or change shape or color. If anything looks suspicious get a medical opinion - sooner rather than later. Also advise your employer of any sun related condition or medical diagnosis.

Wear sunglasses that include a warranty stating they provide 99-100% UVA and UVB (broad-spectrum) protection.

Apply one ounce (a palm full) of [sunscreen](#) to all exposed skin 15 minutes before venturing outdoors. The sunscreen container should specify a sun protection factor (SPF) rating of 15 or above and should state that it provides broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection. Lotion- or cream-based sunscreens tend to adhere to the skin longer, thus providing better protection. Depending on your activity (sweating), sunscreen should be re-applied at least every two hours.

The SPF number on the sunscreen indicates how many times longer, under ideal conditions, a person can stay out in the sun without beginning to turn red in comparison with the amount of time totally unprotected skin would start to burn. Research indicates these numbers are sometimes overstated.

The following OSHA fact sheet contains useful information for employees.

Protecting Yourself in the Sun

Sunlight contains ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which causes premature aging of the skin, wrinkles, cataracts, and skin cancer. The amount of damage from UV exposure depends on the strength of the light, the length of exposure and whether the skin is protected.

There are no safe UV rays or safe suntans.

Skin Cancer

Sun exposure at any age can cause skin cancer. Be especially careful in the sun if you burn easily, spend a lot of time outdoors, or have any of the following physical features:

- Numerous, irregular or large moles.
- Freckles.
- Fair skin.
- Blond, red or light brown hair.

Self-Examination

It's important to examine your body monthly because skin cancers detected early can almost always be cured.

The most important warning sign is a spot on the skin that is changing in size, shape or color during a period of 1 month to 1 or 2 years.

Skin cancers often take the following forms:

- Pale, wax-like, pearly nodules.
- Red, scaly, sharply outlined patches.
- Sores that don't heal.
- Small, mole-like growths—melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer.

If you find such unusual skin changes, see a health care professional **immediately**

Any questions contact your supervisor or call EHS at ext. 3310