



077: Skin Cancer Prevention

Facilitator duties for this session:

Obtain example photos of skin cancer patients if possible

What this Safety Talk covers:

Recognising the dangers of skin cancer from outdoors working without skin appropriate protection.

Reference Material:

For further information refer to:

- Relevant State Legislation
- Company Policy Statement
- Company Work Method Statement
- Employee Guide to Safety

Ask yourself:

1. How much of your working life is spent outdoors?
2. At what time of the day do you generally work outdoors?
3. Do you have natural shade areas available?
4. How do you currently protect yourself from the sun?

Why is skin cancer a risk?

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the major cause of skin cancers in Australia. Outdoor workers have a high risk of developing skin cancers, as they are continually exposed to ultraviolet radiation.

UV exposure from the sun is greatest between 10 am and 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time) because the sun's rays are more direct. Natural filters such as ozone and clouds will reduce the intensity, but sunburn can still occur with cloud cover.

What can be done to avoid skin cancer?

The Occupational Health and Safety legislation requires employers to 'provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to health'

Employees are required to refrain from subjecting their own health and safety to unnecessary risks.

While burns to the skin are the most common health effect from exposure to the sun, skin cancer is the most serious.

Change the job

In many instances, workers can easily and effectively minimize the risk of skin cancer by making some simple changes to the way outdoor work is done.

- Outside jobs can sometimes be relocated to a shady area.
- A temporary shelter can be erected, or trees and buildings used for protection from ultraviolet rays.
- A shady spot should normally be available for lunch and tea breaks, to keep people out of the sun.
- Another way is to organise the job so that tasks requiring work outdoors get done early in the morning, when the ultraviolet rays are less intense. Between 10 am and 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving) ultraviolet radiation is strongest. This is the most important time to minimise exposure to the sun.

If it is not practicable to change the job in these ways, then people working in the sun should be protected by suitable clothing and use an SPF 15+ sunscreen.

Wear clothing and cover your skin

Skin properly covered by clothes will not need any other protection. Long-sleeved shirts and long trousers or skirts provide the best protection. Here are some useful tips on wearing clothes for protection from the sun:

- Clothes that you can see light through should not be worn. If light is getting through then the ultraviolet rays are getting through as well.

Review and Discussion

What is skin cancer a risk for outdoor workers?

What are some ways you may avoid skin cancer?

What is the best way to protect yourself from skin cancer if you have to work outdoors?

What sort of PPE is required when working outdoors in the sun?

How can you change the job to assist to avoid skin cancer developing?

- Long trousers or skirts give more protection than shorts. If shorts are worn, a pair that comes down to the knee will offer more protection.
- Light coloured clothes are cooler in summer, as they reflect the heat.
- Natural fibres such as cotton often allow sweat to evaporate better than artificial fibres.
- A collar on a garment is a good idea, as it will protect the skin on the back of the neck.

Wear a hat and sunglasses

A hat will keep the sun off the face, neck and ears. It will also protect any bald spots. The skin on your head is one of the places where you can easily get skin cancer. Here are some useful tips on hats:

- Broad-brimmed hats are best particularly to protect ears. It should have a 10 to 12 cm brim (about 4"-5").
- Wearing sunglasses is recommended to reduce the risk of cataracts. Unfortunately not all sunglasses cut out sufficient ultraviolet light, so make sure you use a pair that are clearly marked to say they will do the job. Ensure they are safety glasses also.
- A flap on the back of the hat (like the hats of the French Foreign Legion) will keep the sun off the back of the neck.
- Bandanas, neck scarves and collars and wrist bands with cooling capabilities will also help to reduce heat stress situations.

Use an SPF 15+ sunscreen

Sunscreens give skin extra protection against ultraviolet rays. It is a good idea to use an SPF 15+ broad spectrum sunscreen. This sunscreen will protect the skin for at least 15 times longer than the time it would otherwise take to burn it. It will cut down two types of ultraviolet radiation.

Read the manufacturer's instructions before using any sunscreen preparations.

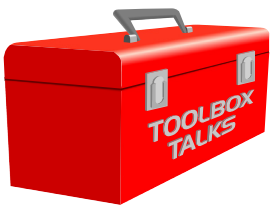
Check for cancers

If you have worked and been exposed to the sun you should have regular check ups for skin cancer. Check the parts of your body most often in the sun such as the face, ears, neck shoulders, arms and hands.

Melanoma is the rarest but most dangerous skin cancer. It can be fatal but nearly all melanomas are cured when treated early. Melanoma can appear even where your body has been protected from the sun.

If you have a freckle, mole, sun spot or birth mark which changes shape, colour or size, or itches or bleeds or a sore which does not heal – see a doctor.

Notes:



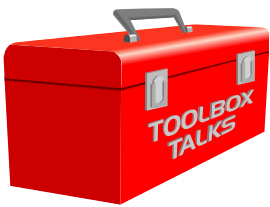
077: Skin Cancer Prevention Review and Assessment

Participant Name: _____

Please circle the correct answer to the following questions.

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the major cause of skin cancers in Australia.	True	False
Outdoor workers do not have a high risk of developing skin cancers, as they are continually exposed to ultraviolet radiation.	True	False
While burns to the skin are the most common health effect from exposure to the sun, skin cancer is the most serious.	True	False
Minimise the risk of skin cancer by erecting a temporary shelter or use the shade of trees and buildings for protection from ultraviolet rays.	True	False
Long-sleeved shirts and long trousers or skirts made of certain materials provide the best UV protection.	True	False
Clothes that you can see light through should be worn.	True	False
Light coloured clothes are cooler, as they reflect the heat.	True	False
The skin on your head, face, nose and ears is some of the places where you can easily get skin cancer.	True	False
SPF 15+ broad spectrum sunscreen will protect the skin for at least 15 times longer than the time it would take to burn it.	True	False
Melanoma can appear even where your body has been protected from the sun.	True	False

Participants Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



Toolbox Talks Register

1. TOOLBOX TALK NUMBER / DETAILS

Date: _____

Session Leader / Trainer Name: _____

Time Commenced: _____ Time Completed: _____

Site / Project Location: _____

2. PARTICIPANTS PRESENT

Name	Signature

3. ISSUES ARISING FROM TALK

Session Leaders Sign Off: _____