

The sun protection six-point code

- Keep your top on. Clothing forms a barrier to the sun's harmful rays – especially tightly woven fabrics.
- Wear a hat with a brim or a flap that covers the ears and the back of the neck – these areas can easily get sunburnt.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, during your breaks and especially at lunch time.
- Use a high factor sunscreen of at least SPF15 on any exposed skin. Apply as directed on the product.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Check your skin regularly for any unusual moles or spots. See a doctor promptly if you find anything that is changing in shape, size or colour, itching or bleeding.

Further information

Keep your top on INDG147(rev1) 1998 HSE Books, also available in priced packs of 20 ISBN 0 7176 1578 2. A leaflet on sun protection for outdoor workers.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the references listed in this publication, their future availability cannot be guaranteed.

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This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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Sun protection



advice for employers of
outdoor workers



If you are an employer or manager responsible for people whose work keeps them outside for most of the day, please read this leaflet. It gives advice on reducing the health risks for your employees when they are working in the sun.

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause skin damage including sunburn, blistering, skin ageing and in the long term can lead to skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the UK, with over 40 000 new cases diagnosed each year.

UV radiation should be considered an occupational hazard for people who work outdoors.

Who is at risk?

- People with pale skin are most at risk of skin damage, especially those with fair or red hair, with a lot of freckles or with a family history of skin cancer.
- People with brown or black skin are at low risk but people of all skin colours can suffer from overheating and dehydration.

As an employer you can..

- Include sun protection advice in routine health and safety training. Inform workers that a tan is not healthy – it is a sign that skin has already been damaged by the sun.
- Encourage workers to keep covered up during the summer months – especially at lunch time when the sun is at its hottest. They can cover up with a long-sleeved shirt, and a hat with a brim or flap that protects the ears and neck.
- Encourage workers to use sunscreen of at least SPF (Sun Protection Factor) 15 on any part of the body they can't cover up and to apply it as directed on the product. They might prefer to use a spray or an alcohol-based (non-greasy) sunscreen.

- Encourage workers to take their breaks in the shade, if possible, rather than staying out in the sun.
- Consider scheduling work to minimise exposure.
- Site water points and rest areas in the shade.
- Encourage workers to drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Keep your workers informed about the dangers of sun exposure – make use of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) leaflet *Keep your top on* [see 'Further information'].
- Encourage workers to check their skin regularly for unusual spots or moles that change size, shape or colour and to seek medical advice promptly if they find anything that causes them concern.

Consulting your employees and their safety representatives is important. Take their views into account when introducing any new sun safety initiatives.

What are the benefits to your company?

- Fewer absence days through sunburn.
- A healthier and better-informed workforce.
- Reduced risk to employees of skin cancer from long-term sun exposure.

