

Sun safety fact sheet

Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is the part of sunlight which causes sunburn and skin damage leading to premature ageing and skin cancer. Damage to the skin occurs as soon as skin is exposed to UVR. Sunburn is the extreme level of this damage. The effects of UVR on skin are cumulative, so damage is building up even without your skin burning.

Skin cancer is a serious disease that can cause disfigurement and death. It can be a lot harder to remove skin cancer than just cutting out a mole.

The majority of skin cancers can be prevented by avoiding exposure to the sun, seeking shade when outdoors, wearing clothing that covers your body, wearing a broad brim hat, wearing sunglasses, and applying SPF30+ sunscreen.

The more time you spend outdoors unprotected the more you put yourself at risk of developing skin cancer.

Sun Safety and Clothing

Clothing is a key element for sun protection when you work outdoors.

Clothing needs to be comfortable but cover the majority of the body to protect you from ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

Key elements for sun protective clothing include:

- **Fabric.** Clothing needs to be made from a tight weave fabric, but also keep the wearer cool. Cotton and microfibre are good fabrics for protection from UVR and allowing coolness.
- **Colour.** Clothing that is darker in colour is more protective from UVR than lighter colours. Dark orange, red, green, blue and black are all recommended. Dark clothing can be hotter in the sun, so don't forget to drink plenty of water so that you do not become dehydrated.
- **Design.** Clothing needs to cover the majority of your body to protect your skin. Long pants and long sleeved collared shirts are essential to protect yourself from UVR. If you choose not to wear long pants, or a long sleeved shirt, do not forget to apply and reapply SPF 30+ sunscreen to exposed skin.
- **Hats.** Remember to protect your face, head, back of neck and ears. A broadbrim hat, or brim and flap for your hard hat are essential. Chose a hat that has a dark colour under the brim, this will ensure minimal reflection of UVR on to your face.

