



# Employee FAQ: Shade as PPE

Shade can provide a cool break on a hot day. It also can help protect your skin from ultraviolet radiation every day of the year. Shade can be permanent or portable. It can be natural or constructed. It can be as small as an umbrella or as large as a freeway underpass. Whether you work in the same place each day, or travel to different job sites, there are many ways to use shade while working or resting.

## **How can I use shade on the job?**

- Use the shade devices that come with or attach to heavy equipment such as a mower/tractor canopies, cab enclosures, and heavy duty umbrellas.
- Look for natural shade in the environment around you, such as shade from dense leafy trees, shadows cast by a building or bridge, or the shade inside your vehicle.
- If allowed, manage your workflow and tasks to use natural shade as the sun moves during the day.
- Create your own shade on or near a job site with pop-up canopies or umbrellas. Shade covers should be made with high UPF\* materials (that is, tightly woven textiles and darker colors).

## **How much UV protection can shade provide?**

Shade devices are all different. Some can provide excellent UV protection (UPF 50+). But like sunscreen, shade cannot provide 100% protection. The level of protection depends on the time of day, angle of the sun, thickness of the shade material, and nearby surfaces that can reflect UV on you even if you are under a shade device.

## **How much shade can my vehicle provide?**

Your vehicle can be a good shade device if the windows are closed. But, be careful on hot day if your vehicle is not air conditioned. Unless the windows are UV-tinted, the glass will not provide excellent shade cover. Most untinted auto glass blocks UVB but not all UVA. For more coverage, try to move your vehicle to a shady place.

## **How much UV can reflect off of different work surfaces?**

- Lawn grass can reflect up to 2% of UV
- Concrete sidewalks can reflect up to 8% of UV
- Asphalt can reflect up to 9% of UV
- Dry sand can reflect up to 18% of UV
- Two-day old snow can reflect up to 50% of UV
- Fresh snow can reflect up to 88% of UV

So, don't rely on shade alone. Use shade along with sunglasses, cover-up clothing, wide-brimmed hats and hard hats, and sunscreen for complete sun protection.

\*UPF = ultraviolet protection factor; a rating system for textiles used for clothing and shade devices