

UV Protection/Sun Safety

OSHA, the Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Cancer Society, the American Academy of Dermatology, and other organizations recognize that over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation can cause sunburn and skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. Fortunately, UV damage and skin cancer are very preventable with simple sun safety practices.

Skin Type and Risk for Sun Damage

Risk for sun damage and skin cancer is largely determined by a person's skin type. Skin types vary from very fair to very dark. Fair-skinned people have less melanin, or protective pigment, in their skin. Their skin tends to burn easily. People with fair skin have the highest risk for skin cancer. As skin types become darker, the risk for skin cancer decreases, but not to zero. Everyone can benefit from sun protection.

The UV Index

The sun's UV intensity varies by location and season. The UV Index is published online by zip code every day by the EPA and the National Weather Service. The scale goes from 0 to 11+. Sun protection is recommended when the Index is a 3 or more. UV is considered high when the Index is at 6 and very high at 8. In general, UV is strongest in summer months. UV is also strongest in the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead. Sun protection is needed most between the hours of 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. Employees are [allowed/encouraged/required] to check the UV Index every day to know when to take sun precautions.

Personal Protection Equipment

Employees are [allowed/encouraged/required] to use clothing, hats with a brim, sunglasses, and sunscreen for personal UV protection when working outdoors in the sun:

- Cover-up with long sleeves, long pants, neck bandanas, and gloves. Choose fabrics that wick away sweat in hot weather.
- Wear a hat, especially one with a wide brim all the way around or with a long flap in the back. Consider adding a sun shade, neck shield, or full winter liner to a hard hat for extra protection.
- Wear sunglasses that provide 99-100% UV protection. Larger lenses provide more coverage and help block reflection.
- Apply sunscreen and sunscreen lip balm to skin not covered by clothing or hats. Sunscreen with SPF 30 or more is recommended for hours of protection. Reapply sunscreen at midday.

Districts/Divisions/Regions may purchase long-sleeved shirts, hats, UV-protective eyewear, sunscreen, and sunscreen lip balm for employee use.

Shade and Scheduling

Employees are [allowed/encouraged/required] to use shade and scheduling to reduce over-exposure to UV when necessary and/or possible:

- Use the shade canopies that come with heavy equipment.
- Take lunch breaks indoors, in a vehicle, or in the shade on high-UV days.
- Schedule meetings and trainings indoors at midday (instead of first thing in the morning or at the end of the work day) on high-UV days.

Training and Information

The Department of Transportation provides a comprehensive sun safety training program (online video) for all supervisors and employees. Supervisors are [allowed/encouraged/required] to have all employees complete the video training, including new hires. Supervisors are also [allowed/encouraged/required] to disseminate sun protection information in regular safety meetings, in print materials, at health events, and on Department of Transportation websites and/or social media pages, as appropriate.

Skin Checks

It is recommended that trainings and materials include information to encourage employees to check their skin regularly for signs of skin cancer. Sores that do not heal or moles that have changed in size, shape, or color should be reported to a health care provider.

Contractors

Contractors and subcontractors to the Department of Transportation are [allowed/encouraged/required] to follow this sun protection guidance.