

WORK SAFE SUN EXPOSURE PROCEDURE

Objective

The objective of this [*insert sport*] Work Safe procedure is to establish and maintain safe working procedures to protect the health and safety of all [*insert sport*] employees and volunteers who are required to work outdoors in the heat and sun.

Responsibilities

Managers and Supervisors

- Ensure that site specific risk assessments are carried out and records maintained, where employees are required to work outdoors in the sun.
- Provide training and instruction for all employees and volunteers who are required to work outdoors in the sun.
- Ensure that identified protective measures are resourced and utilised.

Employees

- Follow the safe working procedures implemented for work outdoors in the sun.
- Use the provided protective measures against the sun's ultraviolet rays when working outside.
- Advise management if replacement/replenishment of protective measures are required or additional protective measures are indicated.

Factors Influencing Sun Exposure

The main factors that influence the risk of over exposure to ultra violet rays from the sun resulting in adverse health effects are:

- Exposure to the sun
- High air temperature
- High humidity, which prevents sweat evaporation
- Low air movement
- Intense physical activity or high work load
- Clothing impairing air movement and sweat evaporation.

Health Effects of Sun Exposure

Work in hot climatic conditions with sun exposure can lead to a number of health related conditions:

- Discomfort
- Sunburn
- Heat cramps
- Heat exhaustion
- Heat stroke.

Employees and volunteers should be encouraged to report any signs of heat illness immediately to their supervisor/manager.

Actions Required

Organisation

- Acclimatisation to work outdoors in the sun may be required for people moving from a cool to a hot climate, eg. work arrangements where a person increases the hours of exposure over several days.
- Re-organise work so that outside work is done in the cooler parts of the day.
- Alternate periods of work in hot conditions with periods of work in cooler conditions.
- Provide breaks in cooler areas during hot periods.
- Consider means to reduce the physical demands of work activities, eg. mechanical lifting devices instead of manual handling.
- Erect temporary cover.

Clothing

- Clothing should permit free flow of cooling air to allow for sweat evaporation.
- Clothing material should be made of predominantly natural fibre and have a loose weave.
- Long sleeved shirts and trousers are recommended for work outdoors to provide maximum protection from sun exposure.
- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) contributes to heat related problems, therefore consideration should be given to providing short rest breaks in a shaded area when PPE is required to be worn.
- Wide brimmed hats should be provided and where hard hats are required, sun shade extensions should be made available.
- Tinted safety glasses should be worn.

Sunscreens

- Sunscreens shall be used to protect any skin not covered by clothes (face, ears, back of neck, hands, legs, etc.)
- All sunscreens shall be of the 30+ broad spectrum type.
- To be effective, a sunscreen must be applied to clean, dry skin, 15 to 20 minutes before going into the sun. Sunscreen should be used only on those areas of the body, which cannot be protected by clothing. Sunscreen shall be re-applied every 2 hours or as directed by the manufacturer.
- Zinc cream or other sun blocks may be applied to the lips and nose for extra protection.

Fluid Replacement

- To avoid the risk of heat stress, easy access to cool drinking water shall be made available.
- Employees should be encouraged to drink 100-200ml of water at frequent intervals to replace fluids lost in sweating.

Instruction & Training

Induction and ongoing training for employees and volunteers who are required to work outdoors in the sun should include:

- Details of specific work arrangements
- Health effects of sun exposure
- Clothing to be worn and use of sun screens
- Fluid replacement
- Early reporting of signs of heat illness.