

Skin Cancer Prevention Strategies for Outdoor Workers

Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canada

Non-melanoma skin cancers are the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canada, with an estimated 76,100 cases in 2014. Additionally, there were an estimated 6,500 cases of melanoma, the most fatal type of skin cancer, in 2014. The incidence rate of skin cancers in Canada continues to rise. The main cause of skin cancer is solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation, a known human carcinogen.

UP TO **90%** OF ALL SKIN CANCERS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH UVR EXPOSURE
A MODIFIABLE AND PREVENTABLE RISK FACTOR

Working outdoors increases your risk of skin cancer

OCCUPATIONAL SUN EXPOSURE



IS A RISK FACTOR FOR

NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCER

Occupational sun exposure is a significant risk factor for non-melanoma skin cancer. The Occupational Health and Safety Act assigns employers the responsibility to take reasonable precaution against workplace hazards. Fortunately, with the right strategies, occupational skin cancer can be preventable.

On average we spend a third of our day at work, often during the daylight hours, so outdoor workers can be exposed to high levels of UV radiation.

Outdoor workers have a greater risk of developing non-melanoma skin cancer than workers with no occupational UV exposure. The dangers of recreational UV exposure are well recognized, but much less attention is given to occupational UV exposure, despite its importance.

To fully protect workers, occupational prevention strategies must extend beyond sunscreen and personal protective equipment use to include structural and administrative controls. A combination of multiple prevention strategies is most effective. These strategies are outlined on the next page.

This factsheet was produced by the Occupational Cancer Research Centre (OCRC), based at Cancer Care Ontario. OCRC is collaborating with Ryerson University and partners across Canada to develop *Sun Safety at Work Canada*, a nationally-applicable workplace-based sun safety program for skin cancer and heat stress prevention funded by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. This program will be housed on an interactive website and will provide a comprehensive range of resources and tools that can be adapted to each company's needs. See <http://www.occupationalcancer.ca/2013/sun-safety-at-work-canada/>



Everyone Makes a Mark



Towards a cancer-free workplace



Skin Cancer Prevention Strategies for Outdoor Workers

Structural Controls



Structural controls are built into the design of the work site, equipment, or process to minimize UV exposure. These include:

- Windows or screens with UV filtering film
- Shade structures such as canopies, tents, trees, or buildings

Administrative controls



Administrative controls change the way work is done in order to minimize UV exposure. These include:

- Modifying work hours or work activities to limit sun exposure between 11am and 4pm, when the UV levels are highest
- Offering sun safety training and education
- Developing a sun safety workplace policy
- Including effective sun safety behaviours as a part of job descriptions and responsibilities
- Having role models in the workplace who demonstrate effective sun safety behaviours
- Providing incentives for effective sun safety behaviours

Person Protective Equipment



Personal protective equipment (PPE) helps to reduce individual UV exposure.

It is the last line of defense and the least effective in minimizing occupational UV exposure.

PPE includes:

- Wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts and pants
- UVR blocking/absorbing fabrics (check the UV protection factor or UPF)
- Eye protection, such as UV blocking sunglasses
- Sun screen with an SPF of at least 30

Be Sunsible is an online resource developed by Alberta Health Services that helps outdoor workplaces reduce workers' sun exposure through step by step strategies and customizable materials. More information on the strategies above and how to implement them can be found at www.besunsible.ca.