Sun Safety

Overview

This talk will cover the facts and statistics of Sun Safety, who is at risk and how to protect yourself.

Introduction

You don't have to work in a desert to suffer from too much heat on the job. Even in a moderate climate many outdoor activities are hot and uncomfortable, especially when you are doing physically demanding work. But discomfort is not the only problem. If you don't take the proper precautions, heat can give you a rash, make you pass out or even in the extreme kill you.

Key Message

Working outdoors exposes you to up to 10 times more UV radiation than indoor workers.

- If you regularly work outdoors protection is recommended all year round, regardless of UV level.
- Both employers and workers share a 'duty of care' to reduce workplace exposure to UV radiation.
- Where possible, move tasks indoors or in the shade and take breaks in the shade, particularly in the middle of the day when UV is highest.
- Wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect yourself from the sun: - long-sleeved shirt with a collar and long trousers - sunglasses or safety glasses that meet the UK Standard.
- Check all of your skin regularly – not just sun-exposed skin.
- See your GP immediately if you notice a new or changing spot.

Facts and Figures

1. UV (ultraviolet) radiation from the sun is a major cause of skin cancer and cases have doubled in the last 20 years.
2. 40,000 people are diagnosed with skin cancer and 2,000 people die from it each year.
3. Sunlight causes the skin to produce a dark pigment called melanin; this is a sign that the skin has been damaged.
4. Long-term sun exposure speeds up the skins ageing process, making it become drier and more wrinkled.
5. People working outside should consider exposure to UV radiation as an occupational health hazard.
6. A suntan is perceived as 'healthy' but it may not be so.

Signs and Symptoms (heat stress/heat stroke)

What signs and symptoms might you notice if your body is too hot?

1. First, you may notice that you are tired and less mentally alert. This increases the chances that an accident might occur.
2. You may sweat. The body produces sweat so the evaporation will cool you off. Sweating isn't as effective if the air is very humid, because not as much sweat evaporates.
3. Heat rash is possible. You get it when your sweat glands swell and get plugged up.
4. You can get sunburn if you're in direct sunlight too long without using a sunscreen product on your skin. Sunburn can be painful and may even lead to skin cancer.

If you don't pay attention to these early symptoms and get out of the heat, you can get heat stress.

What does heat stress do to your body?

1. The first symptom is usually heat cramps. If you don't replace the fluids and salts (called electrolytes) that you lose by sweating, you may get muscle pain or muscle spasms. These are most common in the arms, legs, back and stomach.
2. Heat exhaustion can follow. Your whole body (especially your circulatory system) is extremely stressed. Some possible symptoms are: — Fatigue — Shortness of breath — Pale, flushed face and neck

— Headache, dizziness, or fainting — Clammy skin — Nausea and vomiting — Heavy sweating — Rapid heartbeat and breathing

3. Heat stroke is the most serious stage of heat stress. Your body temperature shoots up.

50% of people with heat stroke die. Symptoms are:— Dizziness and confusion — Rapid pulse — Red, hot, dry skin — High body temperature (around 38-40 C) — Nausea and vomiting — Convulsions — Very little sweating — Fainting

4. Anyone with heat stroke must be taken to a doctor or hospital immediately.

Treatment

What's the best treatment for the different stages of heat stress?

1. Heat cramps — Stop work, drink fluids and rest in a cool area. Drinking electrolyte solutions may also help.
2. Heat exhaustion — Give first aid by moving the person to a cool place to rest. Remove as much clothing as possible. Give the person water. Drinking electrolyte solutions may also help. Don't allow the person to get chilled, and treat for shock if necessary. Get medical help.
3. Heat stroke — Call 999 to get an ambulance immediately. Immerse the person in cool water or ice.

Some people are more likely to get heat stress than others. Why?

You have a higher risk of heat stress if:

- You are not physically fit.
- You are overweight.
- You have a chronic illness like heart disease or diabetes.
- You drink alcohol or take drugs (either illegal drugs or prescription drugs).
- You are dehydrated—from diarrhoea, a fever or not drinking enough water.
- You wear dark, heavy or tight clothing.
- You are not used to working in heat. The more you work in heat (become acclimatized), the more your body gets used to it.

What precautions should you take to prevent heat stress?

- Plan the day to take on more strenuous jobs during the cooler morning hours.
- Drink water (or an electrolyte solution), Drink even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Take frequent breaks in an air-conditioned or shaded area.
- Wear appropriate clothing when you're in the sun. The best clothing is a loose, lightweight cotton shirt and trousers in a light colour.
- Use a sunscreen product to protect your skin from ultraviolet rays in sunlight. It should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. (Check the label.)
- Take frequent cool showers if possible.
- Stay physically fit.
- Get enough sleep.

- Limit your use of alcohol. Ask your doctor about prescription drugs you're taking
- Use the buddy system. Watch your co-worker for signs of heat stress.
- Know what to do if you or your co-worker show any symptoms.
- Notify your supervisor and stop work if you notice any major symptoms.

Sun Safety Code

1. Take care not to burn, this can take as little as 10 minutes.
2. Cover up with loose clothing.
3. Keep your clothing on so that you do not expose unprotected areas.
4. Seek shade during the hottest part of the day and take your breaks in the shade.
5. Apply high factor sunscreen generously and frequently to any parts of the body exposed to the sun; SPF 30 or above.
6. If you are concerned about moles changing shape or colour and itching, weeping or bleeding, see your GP immediately.

PPE

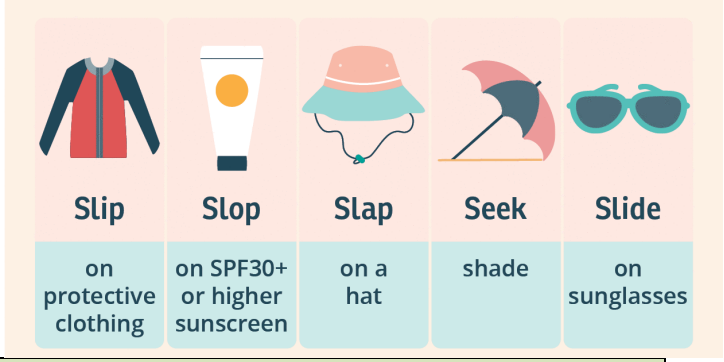
Slip on a long-sleeved shirt with a collar and trousers ideally made from material with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+.

Slop on broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen and lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going out in the sun and reapply every two hours.

Slap on a hat that shades the face, head, ears and neck. Wear attachable brims and neck flaps when wearing a hard hat.

Seek shade, particularly when you take breaks.

Slide on wrap-around sunglasses that are close fitting and that meet the **DIN EN 172**



Get to know your own skin

Most skin cancers (including melanoma) can be treated successfully if it is found early. By getting to know your own skin, you are more likely to notice anything new or different at an earlier stage. Check your skin regularly and see your GP as soon as possible if you see a:

- new spot
- sore that doesn't heal
- spot that looks different from other spots around it
- spot, mole or unusual freckle that has changed in shape, size or colour or
- any skin spot that you are worried about

Do you have any questions for me?

- **Note to supervisor:**

NOTE: Failure to comply with safety instructions and RAMS may result in disciplinary actions

Serial	Name	Date of Toolbox Talk	Signature	Site

By signing this register you are confirming that you attended the toolbox talk and understand the facts and statistics about Sun Safety, who is at risk and how to protect yourself.