

Solar Ultraviolet Radiation

Your organisation has a legal obligation to provide and maintain a safe environment for your volunteers/workers, customers, and visitors – you can read more on this in the previous [Sector Brief – Safety Responsibility and Accountability](#). Under the Duty of Care requirements, you should have in place processes to identify, control, and monitor risk. See [Sector Brief – Managing Safety Risk](#).

A specific risk for workers and visitors to your site is solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR). This sector briefing covers identifying and controlling the risks associated with solar UVR.



IMPORTANT

“The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends that all adults do monthly skin self-exams and see a dermatologist annually, or more frequently if they see something suspicious or have risk factors.”



1) Risks associated with solar UVR

The sun is the main source of ultraviolet radiation (UVR). Solar UVR cannot be seen or felt and can pass through clouds and loosely woven material. It is a known carcinogen like asbestos and tobacco, and is the main cause of skin cancer in Australia. It can also lead to significant and irreversible skin and eye damage.

2) Controlling the hazard

You must implement appropriate safe systems in accordance with the hierarchy of controls to eliminate or minimise the risks to health and safety from solar UVR. You should consider your volunteers/workers, customers and visitors.

3) Controlling the hazard - Identify

To meet your Duty of Care responsibilities, you need to identify tasks where volunteers/workers are at risk from solar UVR because they spend extended periods outside.

4) Controlling the hazard

You should put in place controls to mitigate the hazard. Consider:

- Shade
 - Where specific tasks are required to be completed outside, provide shade (temporary or permanent)
 - Consider where your customers and visitors spend extended periods of time outside. Can you provide shade?
- Uniform/clothing
 - Provide or require your volunteers/workers:
 - Wear a hat (ideally wide brimmed)
 - Wear long sleeved top
 - Wear long pants
 - Wearing sunglasses with ‘good UV protection’

Solar Ultraviolet Radiation

- Sunscreen
 - Provide sunscreen to volunteers/workers, and consider making it freely available to customers, and visitors
- Requiring volunteers/workers to review their working environment. Can the work be completed within some shade, or when the sun is not directly overhead?
- Inform your volunteers/workers about the risks associated with solar UVR and the five steps to applying sunscreen correctly.

Solar UVR is, and will continue to be, a risk for all heritage groups. By applying the risk mitigation strategies detailed above you can demonstratively show you have managed the risk and prevent harm to volunteers/workers, customers, and visitors.

FIVE STEPS TO APPLYING SUNSCREEN:

1. Read the label on the bottle and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
2. Apply it generously. Most people don't use enough sunscreen, applying less than what is recommended and potentially leaving themselves at risk. An average adult needs to use about one teaspoon per body part. This means one teaspoon for the face, neck and ears; a teaspoon for each arm and leg; and a teaspoon each for the front and back of the body.
3. Apply it 20 minutes before going outside. Waiting 20 minutes, allows the sunscreen to bind to your skin
4. Re-apply! Every two hours sunscreen should be reapplied. Making sure you reapply regularly means you're likely to cover any parts of the skin you may have missed
5. When using sunscreen for the first time, test it out on a small section of skin first. Discontinue use if irritation occurs.

If you have more questions or queries, contact:

John Thorogood
Safety, Environment & Quality Manager
Transport Heritage NSW
john.thorogood@thnsw.com.au
0418 615 555

This advice and information is general in nature, does not take into account the specific circumstances of any particular Sector Group, entity or person and is intended as a guide only. THNSW recommends reviewing your particular circumstances before applying any of the advice or information. While every reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this advice and information, THNSW does not guarantee the accuracy, correctness, usefulness or completeness of any facts or opinions contained within it. THNSW accepts no responsibility or liability for any claims, losses, damage, incidents, issues, or other consequences alleged to arise or arising from acting on this advice or information.