



Solar UV Exposure Risk Assessment for Outdoor Workers

This information is to support workplaces in assessing if there is a risk of hazardous levels of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun associated with performing tasks outdoors.

The hazard

Solar UV radiation – The UV index measures the intensity of UV radiation that reaches the earth’s surface. The higher the UV index the greater the risk to skin and eye damage. When the UV index is 3 or above workers need to protect their skin and eyes. Values 3 and above are predominantly seen between April – September. The highest UV index values may be during June and July with peak values approaching 8. UV levels are changeable between April – September. Be prepared and check the daily UV index levels at <https://www.met.ie/uv-index>

Who is at risk?

- Outdoor workers are at risk from UV exposure but also at risk in heatwaves from high outdoor temperatures. If you work outdoors, you may be exposed to 2-3 times more UV radiation from the sun than someone who works indoors, putting you at high risk of skin cancer.
- Both occasional and chronic sun exposure can be harmful. Exposure causing sunburn is the most damaging but frequent non-burning exposures also significantly increase the risk of skin cancer.
- People with fair or freckled skin that burns easily and does not tan, red/ fair hair and light-coloured eyes. The fairer you are, the quicker you will get skin damage and sunburn when the UV is over 3.
- People with a large number of moles (>50).

What is the risk?

- Sunburn
- Skin Cancer
- Eye Damage
- Heat Exhaustion

Step 1 – Record Work Location Particulars

Project / work location:			
Specific work location:			
Task being assessed:			
Estimated number of workers:			
Estimated duration of works (hours):			
Date/time of assessment:			
Person(s) consulted (e.g. staff member/ safety rep):			
Assessment undertaken by:	Name:		Signature:

Step 2 – Determine for the UV Exposure Risk

Instructions: The following checklist details measures, which all workplaces should consider prior to commencement of work.

Tick the most likely to apply and add up the number of ticks in each column (for high, medium and low risk categories).

The column with the most ticks indicates the risk category that should be employed for the site. Each category adds to the accumulated level of risk, adding to the overall risk of unsafe UV exposure.

If two risk categories have an equal number of ticks, the higher risk category of the two shall apply.

Where a High or Medium risk column results with the most ticks, control measures should be applied, as per Step 3.

The results of the risk assessment must be documented in accordance with [legislative requirements](#).

	High risk	Moderate risk	Low risk
What time of day spent outdoors from April to September (including in vehicles without window tinting)?	All/most of the day <input type="checkbox"/>	9am-11am <input type="checkbox"/>	Before 9am <input type="checkbox"/>
	11am-3pm <input type="checkbox"/>	3pm-5pm <input type="checkbox"/>	After 5pm <input type="checkbox"/>
In which month does the work take place?	All year <input type="checkbox"/>	March and April <input type="checkbox"/>	October – February <input type="checkbox"/>
	May, June, July <input type="checkbox"/>	August and September <input type="checkbox"/>	
What kind of surface is the work performed on?	Water (Summer) <input type="checkbox"/>	Water (Winter) <input type="checkbox"/>	Grass <input type="checkbox"/>
	White house paint <input type="checkbox"/>	Snow <input type="checkbox"/>	Soil <input type="checkbox"/>
	Sand <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Concrete <input type="checkbox"/>		
What level of shade is the work performed under?	No shade <input type="checkbox"/>	Total Shade <input type="checkbox"/>	Indoors <input type="checkbox"/>
	Partial Shade <input type="checkbox"/>		
What level of shade is provided during breaks?	No shade <input type="checkbox"/>	Total Shade <input type="checkbox"/>	Indoors <input type="checkbox"/>
	Partial Shade <input type="checkbox"/>		
TOTAL (The column in total risk assessment with the most ticks indicates the risk category that should be employed for the site).			

Step 3 – Assess Control Measures In Place / Required

Important Note: Where a High or Medium risk column results with the most ticks at Step 2, control measures should be applied.

Engineering Controls		Details
• Shade provided (portable, natural or permanent)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Surface can be modified	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Window tinting provided in work vehicles	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Administrative Controls		Details
• Work can be rotated between staff to avoid long periods of UV exposure	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Work tasks and work times can be altered/adapted to avoid high UV exposure	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Workers can take regular breaks away from the sun	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Work can be moved into the shade or indoors	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Shaded work can be done in the middle of the day	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Drinking water is provided	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Workers have been advised of risks of UV exposure and associated controls	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Personal Protective Equipment		Details
• Workers cover up with long sleeves/collared tops and long pants (Use fabrics with a tight weave or rated with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+ recommended).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Workers wear wraparound sunglasses meeting EN 170/EN172 standards	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Workers wear wide brimmed/buckets style hats	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Workers wear broad-spectrum, water resistant, factor 30+ sunscreen and reapply often	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
• Workers wear lip protection	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Additional Controls		Details
•	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Step 4: Actions

No.	Actions	Responsible person	Action date
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

For More Information

For more information on how to strategically address skin cancer prevention among outdoor workers click here for each resource:

- [HSA BeSMART.ie Free Safety Management and Risk Assessment Tool](#)
- [SunSmart audit tool for skin cancer prevention in outdoor workers](#)
- [SunSmart framework for skin cancer prevention in outdoor workers](#)
- [SunSmart sample terms of reference for skin cancer prevention group](#)
- [SunSmart Survey for skin cancer prevention in outdoor workers](#)
- [Tools and resources for skin cancer prevention in outdoor workers](#)