

## MAY'22 TOOLBOX TALK – ‘Skin Cancer Prevention’



### Contributor: Kathy O’Leary, BAM Ireland

*“I worked as a Contracts Manager with TTS Construction in Cairns Australia at one stage in my career. We were issued with a company uniform. I chose shorts and a short-sleeved shirt thinking ‘This is great - I’ll get paid and top up my tan’.*

*Luckily, a very wise foreman I was working with showed me the many scars on his face and arms where he had sarcomas removed. Suffice to say the uniform changed to long trousers and a long-sleeved shirt. Thanks to him I am sure I have avoided the same fate.”*



(Kathy O’Leary Head of Health and Safety, BAM Ireland)

### Contributor’s Shared Advice:

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with over 11,000 cases diagnosed annually of cancer. Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. Working outside for all or part of the day exposes construction workers to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun, even when it’s cloudy outside. Exposure to UV radiation increases the risk for skin cancer.
- Use a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. A broad-spectrum sunscreen protects against UVA and UVB radiation. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after excessive sweating.
- Water, snow, sand, concrete, and metal reflect and intensify UV radiation and increase your chance of getting sunburnt.
- Wear tightly woven and loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and trousers.
- Protect the back of your neck. A cloth flap can be attached to your helmet.
- There are safety glasses that also provide protection against UVA and UVB radiation.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible and when taking breaks. The sun is strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Examine your skin from head-to-toe every month. The most important signs to look for are moles that change in size, colour, or shape, new growths, and sores or patches that bleed and don’t heal.
- For more information, visit the webpage of the HSE’s National Cancer Control Programme: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/cancer/prevention/skin-cancer-prevention-sunsmart.html>