



TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AUSTRALIA
VICTORIAN/TASMANIAN BRANCH
ABN 47 634 608 538

52-56 Rouse Street, Port Melbourne
PO Box 203, Port Melbourne, Vic., 3207
Tel: 1300 727 614 Fax: (03) 9646 1792
E-mail: info@twu.asn.au
www.twu.asn.au

President: Kevin Hoey
Vice President: David White
Branch Secretary: Bill Noonan
Branch Assistant Secretary: Wayne Mader
Trustees: Anna Gileno, Michael Nealer

Tasmania and Victorian Country
Telephone: 1300 727 614

TWU – VIC/TAS

NOSHC: 3012(1991) Jan 2009

OHS GUIDANCE NOTE - No. 3

“Protection from Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight”

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

- Australia and New Zealand have the highest incidence of Skin Cancer in the world
- 2 in 3(66.66%) persons will be diagnosed with skin cancer before the age of 70
- Skin Cancer costs the Australian health system @ \$300,000,000.00 (in 2001)
- It is the highest cost of all Cancers(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

FACTORS:

- Exposure during childhood
- Participation in outdoor work resulting in increased exposure to solar UV radiation
- Solar UV radiation intensifies with height above sea level. (Regional Victoria/Tasmania)
- Solar UV radiation at greatest intensity between 10:00am – 2:00pm (Normal EST)
- (11:00am – 3:00pm Daylight saving hours)
- The risk increases with Fair Complexion, Dysplastic Naevi Syndrome and Keratoses (Sunspots) and previously diagnosed cases of Cancer.
- While certain types of skin are at a higher risk it is important everyone should protect their skin from exposure, regardless of skin type
- Intermittent exposure to Solar UV radiation is also a risk especially for those who work outdoors on a part-time basis

SUNBURN:

The effect of sunburn include reddening of the skin, blistering, swelling and later peeling of the skin, generally within 8 to 24 hours. For untanned skin, exposed to the summer sun between 10:00am – 2:00pm the effects will be:

- 12 minutes of sun exposure will result in mild sunburn
- 30 minutes of sun exposure will result in appreciable discomfort
- 60 minutes of sun exposure will result in peeling and blistering, and
- 120 minutes of sun exposure will result in permanent damage

LONG TERM EXPOSURE

In the longer term repeated exposure to Solar UV radiation can result in Keratoses, Skin Cancers (Basal Cell Carcinoma, Squamous Cell Carcinoma or a Melanoma) and/or premature skin aging.

EFFECT ON THE EYE'S

Exposure to solar UV Radiation can cause short term effects such as:

- Photoconjunctivitis** – inflammation of the conjunctiva
(the mucous membrane covering the anterior portion of the eye) or
- Photokeratitis** – inflammation of the cornea.

Symptoms of these complaints include painful sensation in the eyes, excessive blinking and tears, the sensation of foreign body in the eyes, difficulty in looking at strong lights and swelling of the eyes. The effects are apparent within a few hours and usually disappear within two (2) days. Permanent damage is rare.

Some industrial chemicals can cause photosensitisation of the eyes, for example exposure to some coal tar derivatives can cause damage to the outer surface of the eye.

LONG TERM EXPOSURE

Long term exposure to solar UV radiation include damage to the cornea, formation of cataracts and pterygia. Cataracts are opacities of the lens of the eye. Pterygia are wing-shaped growths of tissue on the outside of the eye. They can grow over the cornea of the eye and cause mild conjunctivitis

Exposure to photosensitisation substances can worsen the effects of solar UV radiation

EMPLOYER AND WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

Occupational Health and Safety legislation in Australia requires employers to provide and maintain, as far as practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health. This is the Employers general "Duty of Care"

Workers are required to comply with instructions given by their employer for the reasons of health and safety and take reasonable precautions to protect themselves and others at work.

CONSULTATION (Con-sul-tat-ion):-Employers should consult with workers and/or Health and Safety Representatives (HSR's) on matters directly affecting their health and safety. In this case it should involve the assessment of exposure to solar UV Radiation, the development and implementation of safe working procedures, and other control measures.

Further information regarding "Guidance for Welfare at Work" and "Seasonal Heat" is available for Members who can contact the *TWU Health and Safety Section* or the TWU Member Assist Officer for a copy the Union's Policy

Phone: 1300-727614
Fax: 03-9646 1792
Website: www.twu.asn.au
Email: info@twu.asn.au