



Personal Solar UV Exposure Risk Assessment for Outdoor Workers

This information is to support you in assessing your personal level of risk of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun associated with performing tasks outdoors and how to best protect yourself.

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?

- 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

Instructions for use

Please answer the following questions and keep track of the number of a’s, b’s and c’s you answer. Use the table at the end of the questionnaire to add up your score. Refer to the risk category descriptions to see your level of risk and what steps you can take to protect yourself.



Solar UV Safety at Work

1. **When do you work outside?**
 - a) Early morning (before 11am) and/or late afternoon/evening (after 3pm)
 - b) Mid-day (11am-3pm)
 - c) All day

2. **When working outdoors, are you exposed to the sun/UV rays for:**
 - a) Less than 1 hour per day
 - b) 1-3 hours per day
 - c) 3 or more hours per day

3. **Are you able to limit time working in the sun during mid-day hours (11am-3pm)?**
 - a) Yes
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) No

4. **Do you do a lot of outdoor work between April and September?**
 - a) No
 - b) Yes

5. **Is shade available when you are working?**
 - a) Provided shade (canopy, umbrella, tent, shade structure on equipment, vehicle)
 - b) Some shade (natural shade from trees or shade from the side of the buildings)
 - c) No shade

6. **Is shade available when you are taking a break?**
 - a) Provided shade (canopy, umbrella, tent, shade structure on equipment, vehicle)
 - b) Some shade (natural shade from trees or shade from the side of the buildings)
 - c) No shade

7. **Do you work around reflective surfaces?**
 - a) No
 - b) Yes: Water (Winter), asphalt
 - c) Yes: snow, concrete, water (Summer), white house paint, sand



8. Is the UV index posted or shared at your workplace?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9. What personal protective measures do you use while you are at work (provided by yourself or the employer)?

- a) All of the following: Wide brimmed hat/bucket style hat or hard hat with a brim and neck flap, long pants, long sleeves, UV protective wraparound eyewear (sunglasses or safety glasses), SPF 30 (broad spectrum, water resistant) or higher sunscreen
- b) 3 or more of the following: Wide brimmed hat/bucket style hat or hard hat with a brim and neck flap, long pants, long sleeves, UV protective wraparound eyewear (sunglasses or safety glasses), SPF 30 (broad spectrum, water resistant) or higher sunscreen
- c) 3 or less of the following: Wide brimmed hat/bucket style hat or hard hat with a brim and neck flap, long pants, long sleeves, UV protective wraparound eyewear (sunglasses or safety glasses), SPF 30 (broad spectrum, water resistant) or higher sunscreen

10. Have you been sunburned at work in the last year?

- a) No
- b) Yes, once
- c) Yes, two or more times

11. Which best describes your natural (non-exposed) skin colour?

- a) Black or dark
- b) Olive or medium
- c) Fair or very fair/freckled

12. Which best describes your natural hair colour?

- a) Black or dark brown
- b) Medium or light brown
- c) Red or blonde

13. Do you have light coloured eyes? (e.g. blue, green or grey)

- a) No
- b) Yes



14. Do you freckle easily?

- a) No
- b) Somewhat
- c) Yes

15. Do you burn before you tan?

- a) Never
- b) Sometimes
- c) Always

16. Do you have many moles?

- a) No
- b) Somewhat
- c) Yes

17. Before the age of 18, did you have:

- a) No blistering sunburns
- b) A few blistering sunburns
- c) Several blistering sunburns

18. Where did you live as a child?

- a) Canada, the Northern US, Northern Europe, Russia, Greenland, Iceland
- b) Southern US, Southern Europe, Asia, Middle East
- c) Hawaii, Australia, Central America, South America, South Asia, Africa

19. Have you or a family member had skin cancer?

- a) No
- b) Yes, family history of skin cancer
- c) Yes, personal history of skin cancer

20. When not at work, do you spend a lot of free time outdoors?

- a) Never
- b) Sometimes
- c) Always



Scores

Complete the following table by counting the number of times you have answered a, b, and c. Add up the risk score column to get your total risk score. Score 0 points for every time you answered a, 1 point for every time you answered b, and 2 points for every time you answered c.

a's		0	=
b's		x 1	=
c's		x 2	=
Total risk score			=

Results

0-12 Points: Although you may spend limited time in the sun, already protect yourself well, or have a skin type that is less sensitive to the sun, you may still be at risk. Continue to protect yourself whenever you are out in the sun at work and in your free time.

13-24 Points: I am at a medium risk. While you may only work out in the sun on some days, may already be making use of some sun protective measures or have skin that is moderately sensitive to the sun, you are still at an increased risk for short and long-term skin damage due to overexposure to the sun/UV rays.

Find out what your workplace is doing to protect outdoor workers from the sun. To reduce your risk, **continue to take steps** to protect yourself from the sun both at work and in your free time:

- Cover up – wear loose clothing, long sleeves and pants
- Protect your eyes – use UV protective eyewear
- Cover your head, neck and ears – wear a wide brimmed hat or a hard hat with a brim and use a neck flap
- Take your breaks in the shade – get out of the sun when you can, especially between 11am-3pm, when UV is the strongest
- Use sunscreen and lip balm – use at least an SPF 30 broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen and don't forget to reapply
- Be skin aware – report changes in skin spots and moles to your doctor as soon as possible – early detection is very important



25-37 Points

I am at a high risk. Because you work outside in the sun regularly, may not be adequately protecting yourself from the sun, and/or have a skin type that is highly sensitive to the sun, you are at a high risk of short and long-term skin damage due to over-exposure to the sun/UV rays.

Find out what your workplace is doing to protect outdoor workers from the sun/UV rays. To reduce your risk, **it is extremely important** that you take steps to protect yourself from the sun both at work and in your free time by:

- Cover up – wear loose clothing, long sleeves and pants
- Protect your eyes – use UV protective eyewear
- Cover your head, neck and ears – wear a wide brimmed hat or a hard hat with a brim and use a neck flap
- Take your breaks in the shade – get out of the sun when you can, especially between 11am-3pm, when UV is the strongest
- Use sunscreen and lip balm – use at least an SPF 30 broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen and don't forget to reapply

For More Information on how to strategically address skin cancer prevention among outdoor workers, click here for each resource:

- [SunSmart UV Exposure Risk Assessment for Outdoor Workers \(Group of workers\)](#)
- [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](#)

This resource has been adapted on approval from Sun Safety Canada personal risk assessment on UV.