

# SURVIVAL TIPS

Suggestions to keep you healthy and free of injury

## Mr (not so) Golden Sun

**Exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun is the main cause of skin cancer in New Zealand. Two out of three of us will develop some type of skin cancer, and having darker skin does not protect you. Of the skin cancer types, Basal Cell Carcinoma and Squamous Cell Carcinoma account for around 45,000 new cases and 45 deaths each year. Melanoma accounts for around 1800 new cases and 200 deaths annually. There is also risk of eye cataracts, dehydration and heat stress.**

### **Tip 1: Learn the hazards**

You must be told the hazards of solar radiation in your work environment, what impact sun exposure may have on your health and what precautions to take. You have the right to know.

### **Tip 2: Check for a policy**

Your employer must identify the outdoor tasks that expose you to solar UV rays and then minimise exposure by implementing procedures, using natural and/or artificial shade, and providing personal protective equipment. Employers should develop an 'ultra violet protection policy' covering the three main areas for UV Protection: issue and use of sunscreen, sun hats for neck and ear protection, and issue of UV-rated sunglasses.

### **Tip 3: Gimme shelter**

As much as possible, avoid being outside between 11am

and 4pm in the summer months. Ask your supervisor for work times which let you complete outdoor tasks in the morning or late afternoon. Make use of the shade provided by trees, buildings and temporary shelters (eg awnings, umbrellas), and take your meal breaks in the shade.

### **Tip 4: Always wear sunscreen**

- protect any skin not covered by clothes;
- use a SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sun-screen;
- apply it 20 minutes before going outside;
- re-apply it every two hours;
- apply zinc cream to lips and nose for extra protection.

### **Tip 5: Always wear a hat and sunglasses**

A sun hat with a broad brim of at least 12cm, or with a flap at the back (legionnaires type), or a hard hat with a flap or brim added. To safeguard against cataracts, wrap-around sunglasses that conform to AS/NZ Standard 1067:1990 are recommended. Sunglasses should be both glare-resistant and shatterproof.

### **Tip 6: Wear protective clothing**

Clothes provide the best protection, namely long sleeved shirts and trousers (darker colours are best) with a tight weave to the material, and loose fitting for coolness, with a collar to protect the neck.

### **Tip 7: Check your skin**

Check yourself for early signs of skin cancer. If you find any of the following signs, see your doctor:

- any unusual skin conditions that don't heal in four weeks;
- any sore, ulcer or scaly patch on the skin;
- a white patch on the lips that doesn't heal;
- any mole that seems to grow quickly;
- any mole that changes shape or colour;
- any mole that bleeds, or repeatedly itches.

### **Tip 8: Take responsibility**

As an employee you must take reasonable care of your own health. You must follow your employers' health and safety instructions and use sun hats, sunscreen and sunglasses as instructed.

Do not sunbathe during your lunch break. Reduce exposure to the sun in your outdoor leisure activities, and keep your family protected too.

**Disclaimer:** these survival tips are general in nature and are not intended to be comprehensive. Always take into account your own particular circumstances. If you have any questions, please discuss them with your supervisor.

*These survival tips supplied by the New Zealand Safety Council, [www.safetycouncil.org.nz](http://www.safetycouncil.org.nz) or email [info@safetycouncil.org.nz](mailto:info@safetycouncil.org.nz)*