
Parent Procedure(s): • [Operations Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment / Clothing](#)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to implement procedures for minimising the risk associated with exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

2. SCOPE

The procedure applies to all outdoor workers including contractors.

3. INTRODUCTION

Exposure to the sun poses a significant risk to all outdoor workers.

The sun causes immediate and lasting health problems, including sunburn, heat exhaustion, blindness and dehydration. Too much ultraviolet radiation from the sun can also lead to skin cancer.

Skin cancer is by far the most prevalent form of cancer in Australia and the incidence rates are the highest in the world. Two out of every three Australians will develop some form of skin cancer in their lifetime. In Victoria skin cancer accounts for more than half of all cancers diagnosed.

Outdoor workers may have a higher risk of developing a non-melanocytic skin cancer than people that work indoors. Working outdoors increases your skin cancer risk by up to 10 times.

GWMWater has an obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment. This obligation includes providing adequate protection from the hazards that GWMWater staff may be subject to when working in an outdoor environment. Ultraviolet radiation is one such hazard.

Protect your skin at work by:

- a) Slip on clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- b) Slop on SPF 30 or higher, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen and re-apply every 2 hours, or more, if sweating.
- c) Slap on a hat that shades the face, ears and neck.
- d) Seek shade during breaks or move outdoor tasks to a shady spot where possible.
- e) Slide on close-fitting, wrap around style sunglasses.

4. PROCEDURE

The following control measures will be implemented at a worksite according to the conditions and works involved. The risk posed by UVR at the site should be assessed prior to works commencing.

4.1 Engineering Controls.

Employees working outdoors are encouraged to maximise the use of shade provided by trees, buildings and other structures. Where there is limited access to natural shade, the use of fixed or portable shade structures will be considered and implemented where practical.

4.2 Administrative Controls.

Works Supervisors are to give consideration to the reorganisation of planned outdoor work programs to reduce UVR exposure including:

- a) rescheduling work hours to enable workers to start earlier during October – March
- b) providing opportunities for workers to undertake alternative shaded tasks when UVR is most intense (11am – 3pm)
- c) rotating workers regularly between shaded areas and outdoor/exposed locations

4.3 Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing

Personal protective equipment is sometimes the easiest and most practical way to rectify a problem with UVR exposure.

Site managers or their delegates will be responsible for determining which staff are regarded as outdoor workers and, therefore, entitled to be issued with hats, sunscreen, protective clothing and eye wear for work purposes, and in what circumstances particular equipment will be supplied.

GWMWater will provide:

- a) sun protective clothing
- b) eye protection
- c) sunscreen/lip balm
- d) hats

4.3.1 Sun Protective Clothing

GWMWater provides a uniform for all Operations (outdoor) staff. The selection of protective clothing will take into account both the need to block out the sun and the need to reduce the effects of heat. Uniforms provided to employees will have, as a minimum, full length sleeves and full length pants. Shirts will be lightweight, loose fitting and have a collar. All uniform items feature close weave fabric and a UPF factor of at least 30 (refer AS/NZS 4399:2017). Other hazards such as fire resistance will be considered, shall be assessed and, if necessary, take priority over the UV hazard providing that UVR minimum standards are met.

4.3.2 Eye Protection

UV radiation from the sun also affects the eyes and therefore there is a need to provide eye protection in the form of sunglasses.

GWMWater workers who work outdoors shall be provided with close fitting eye protection against the sun. The eye protection shall meet Australian Standard AS1067 and where safety glasses are required, these will also comply with AS1337.

4.3.3 Sunscreen

Sunscreen will be provided by GWMWater for protection additional to that provided by the outdoor uniform issued to all operations employees. Sunscreen is not a substitute for appropriate sun protective clothing, as sunscreens do not offer complete protection against the sun.

Broad spectrum and water resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30+ and rated UVA and UVB will be provided. Use-by dates are to be regularly checked to ensure sunscreen in use is not out of date. Sunscreen will be provided to all employees and be placed in accessible locations within the workplace. Employee will be instructed on correct application and use. For optimum effect, sunscreen is to be generously applied to all areas of exposed skin at least twenty minutes before going outside and reapplied at least every two hours. Lip balm containing SPF 30+ will also be provided.

4.3.4 Hats

Hats appropriate to the work situation are to be worn. Hats will be made of close weave material, **be broad brimmed or be a legionnaire style cap**. Brim attachments and neck flaps will be provided where hard hats are worn. In circumstances where the wearing of a broad brimmed hat causes difficulties due to their size, sunscreen and other protective measures should be used instead.

Note: Peaked caps with a legionnaires style velcro attachment are issued as part of the outdoor uniform. These items although complying with AS 4399:2017, in terms of fabric weave and UPF, do NOT offer full body protection and it is expected that the legionnaires style velcro attachment is worn with the peaked hat and that sunscreen would be applied as required.

4.4 Education and Training

Employees, including managers and other persons responsible for organising outdoor work will receive training. All new employees will be made aware of the UVR protection program as part of their induction. The objectives of the training include:

- a) provision of **this procedure** at induction
- b) increasing the awareness of the harmful health effects of UV
- c) the promotion and correct use of control measures
- d) the provision of information for self-screening for skin cancer

4.5 Medical Examination

Outdoor staff will be checked for possible skin cancer and other UVR exposure related skin conditions during the two yearly skin check medical examinations, to allow for early detection and treatment.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Supervisors

Supervisors are to:

- a) Manage work programs in order to limit UVR exposure during October through March.
- b) Supervise outdoor workers to ensure compliance with the requirements of the instruction.
- c) Regularly monitor employee compliance with UVR control strategies and report difficulties experienced.
- d) Ensure injury reporting procedures are followed when an incident of sunburn or excessive sun exposure occurs in the workplace.
- e) Practice UVR control measures when working outdoors.

5.2 Employees/Contractors

Employees and contractors undertaking outdoor work are to co-operate with all measures introduced to minimise the risk associated with exposure to UVR, including wearing personal protective equipment as supplied.

6. REFERENCES

- a) SunSmart – Protecting Workers from Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight – Cancer Council of Victoria
- b) Sunsmart – Sun protection for outdoor workers
- c) Sunsmart - Sun protective hats
- d) WorkSafe Victoria Guidance Material
- e) AS/NZS 4399:2017 - Sun Protective Clothing – Evaluation and Classification
- f) AS/NZS 1067:2016 - Sunglasses and Fashion Spectacles
- g) AS/NZS 1337.1:2010 - Eye and face protectors for Occupational applications
- h) AS/NZS 2604:2012 - Sunscreen products – Evaluation and Classification

7. DEFINITIONS

Ultraviolet (UVR) Radiation	is a component of the electromagnetic radiation (EMR) spectrum emitted by the sun. It is composed of wavelengths from 200-400nm.
Outdoor Worker	is any employee who in the course of their duties is required to work outdoors.
SPF	means Sun Protection Factor
Sunscreen	Is any sun protection factor (SPF) rated chemical product designed for the process of skin protection.
Eye Protection	is any screen or glasses type device which meets Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067 specific purpose type (b), and AS/NZS 1337 if necessary.
Sun Protective Clothing	is any clothing that provides entire covering of the upper and lower body including limbs and whose fabric complies with

UVA	AS/NZS 4399:2017 is UVR of wavelengths between 315 to 400nm – more recently recognised as a factor in causing skin cancer, but not readily recognisable via sunburn.
UVB	Is UVR of wavelengths between 280 – 315nm – most readily recognised as a factor as causing reddening (sunburn) and skin damage leading to skin cancer.