



***PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST
UV RADIATION***

Many workers say that worrying about their skin doesn't rank very high on their list of priorities; but outdoor workers are at great risk of developing skin cancer as a result of overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

Working around reflective or hot surfaces and equipment compounds the danger of overexposure to the sun. The most dangerous time of the day is between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. If you must be outdoors during these hours, follow these suggestions:

Use a sunscreen, not just any kind, but one with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. The American Cancer Society recommends applying sunscreen to all body surfaces not covered with hair, a hat or clothing, about 20 minutes before going outside. If you perspire heavily or work around the water, use a waterproof sunscreen reapplied periodically.

Cover exposed areas. Sweltering temperatures can lure you into unsafe sun behavior. Many workers complain, "It's too hot to wear pants and long-sleeved shirts," so they choose shorts, tank tops or go shirtless. The body of the less dressed becomes a target for the burning sun. To help prevent burning, wear lightweight, tightly woven but opaque clothing. A wide-brimmed safety hat should be worn to protect your head and face from direct sunlight. It should protect ear tips, neck, temples, and lower face. A bandana worn around the neck provides further protection.

Wear sunglasses. UVR damage to the eyes is often overlooked by outdoor workers, yet eyes are six times more sensitive than skin to ultraviolet radiation. Sunglasses or other protective eyewear is a must. Ultraviolet light increases the risk of cataracts and photokeratitis (inflammation of the cornea). Make sure you wear sunglasses that block out UVR rays. This type of protection is particularly important if working around water.

Even on cloudy days, outdoor workers are at risk of overexposure from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Clouds, wind or other weather conditions, and shiny or reflective surfaces like water or metal intensify the sun's ability to burn the skin. By paying attention to the day's sun forecast and taking the appropriate precautions, you can stay safe while working under the sun.