

## Personal Risk Assessment: Sun and Skin Cancer for Outdoor Workers

For outdoor workers, the health risks associated with exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun depend on a range of environmental and operational factors at work, along with a range of personal risk factors.

The following sun safety risk assessment will help you to determine your personal level of risk and how to best protect yourself.

In the workplace there are also a range of artificial sources of UV (e.g. welding arcs). Even though these have not been covered in this personal risk assessment, if your work involves exposure to artificial sources, your overall risk will be higher than that indicated in this assessment.

This personal risk assessment is an educational tool to be used with solar UV training. If you have questions or concerns regarding any health risks identified, please consult your family doctor or a dermatologist.

### 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 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: concrete, asphalt, or grass
  - c. Yes: snow, sea surf, beach 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 or hard hat with a brim and neck flap, long pants, long sleeves, UV protective eyewear (sunglasses or safety glasses), SPF 30 or higher sunscreen
  - b. 3 or more of the following: Wide brimmed hat or hard hat with a brim and neck flap, long pants, long sleeves, UV protective eyewear (sunglasses or safety glasses), SPF 30 or higher sunscreen
  - c. 3 or less of the following: Wide brimmed hat or hard hat with a brim and neck flap, long pants, long sleeves, UV protective eyewear (sunglasses or safety glasses), SPF 30 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

## Sun Sensitivity

11. Which best describes your natural skin type?
  - a. Black or brown
  - b. Olive
  - c. Fair or very fair
  
12. Which best describes your natural hair?
  - a. Black or dark brown
  - b. Medium or light brown
  - c. Red or blond
  
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**.

<b>a's</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>= 0</b>
<b>b's</b>		<b>x 1</b>	<b>=</b>
<b>c's</b>		<b>x 2</b>	<b>=</b>
<b>TOTAL Risk Score</b>			<b>=</b>

## 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.

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 safe – report changes in skin spots and moles to your doctor as soon as possible – early detection is 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.

Find out what your workplace is doing to protect outdoor workers from the sun. 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

- Be skin safe – report changes in skin spots and moles to your doctor as soon as possible  
– early detection is important

Content adapted from the following sources:

Canadian Dermatology Association. (2012). *Sun Sensitivity Quiz*. Retrieved from [http://www.dermatology.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/SunSensitivityTest\\_EN.pdf](http://www.dermatology.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/SunSensitivityTest_EN.pdf)

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