

## **Keep your top on**

Health risks from working in the sun

Advice for outdoor workers from the Health and Safety Executive and the Health Departments in England, Scotland and Wales



# Introduction

**This leaflet provides some practical, common sense advice on reducing the risk of ill health caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight.**

## **Who is this leaflet for?**

Its mainly for outdoor workers, such as those working on farms, building sites and in waste collection, who are more likely to be at risk if their work results in exposure to direct sunlight for long periods.

## **What are the risks?**

Skin cancer is one of most common forms of cancer in the UK. Too much exposure to UV radiation from the sun can cause skin damage including sunburn, blistering, skin ageing and in the long term could lead to skin cancer. Those with a family history of skin cancer (and those with pale skin/ fair hair) may be more at risk.

## **Abnormal reactions to sunlight**

Some medicines, contact with some chemicals used at work (such as dyes, wood preservatives, coal-tar and pitch products), and contact with some plants, can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Your works doctor or family doctor should be able to advise you further. Take this leaflet with you.

## **Simple advice for outdoor workers**

- Keep your top on! Cover up by wearing appropriate clothing
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, especially during breaks
- Use a high-factor sunscreen (at least SPF30)
- Watch for symptoms that include: appearance of new moles or spots, changes to shape, size, colour of moles and spots or if they itch or bleed (seek medical advice)
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration

## Further information

- For information about health and safety visit <https://books.hse.gov.uk> or <http://www.hse.gov.uk>. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.
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