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**Workplace Skin Cancer Prevention**

**Framework – Outdoor workers**

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with over 11,000 cases diagnosed annually and the NCRI has estimated that between 2015-2045 the incidence of skin cancer will almost double1. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the main risk factor for the development of skin cancer. The International Agency for research on cancer (IARC) classifies UV radiation as carcinogenic to humans (Class 1)2.

In the recently published Skin Cancer prevention Plan (2019-2022) outdoor workers have been identified as a high-risk group since the nature of their occupation exposes them to increased UV radiation3. Outdoor workers can be exposed to between 5-10 times more UV radiation than indoor workers4.

Therefore as part of this initiative it is recommended that the organisation develop a Skin Cancer Prevention Framework to protect outdoor workers from solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) in the workplace. The framework will help to strategically address skin cancer prevention, structure the activities and ensure sustainability. It will also show the commitment to reducing UV solar exposure and adhering to best practice in workplace skin cancer prevention. This framework will be your overarching high level document guiding the work. An annual work plan should subsequently be developed to detail activities for the year showing the focus, messaging, activities and initiatives the workplace will undertake in skin cancer prevention. This annual work plan should be built on annually and adjusted to progress the work.



1. **Workplace Specifics – Getting started**
* Form a small working group on skin cancer prevention
* Seek representation from across the organisation to investigate, plan, develop and guide implementation of your skin cancer prevention framework
* The group should be made up of Health and Safety representation, occupational health, health and wellbeing, outdoor worker representatives, others as necessary
* Terms of Reference and good governance will keep this group focused and productive
* Detail all workers across various departments that are outdoors for all or part of their day regularly
* Details categories of outdoor workers and job specifics
* Review sub-contractors and visitors to the workplace, do you need to protect them from solar UV?
1. **Planning**
* Research skin cancer prevention in your organisation – what is current practice? What are the gaps? Consider completing the audit tool for workplaces in skin cancer prevention to assess all elements of current activities.
* Conduct a risk assessment on all outdoor worker positions – who is outdoors, for how long and how often, at what times of the year are they outdoors, what protective measures are in place?
* Conduct baseline research to record attitudes, beliefs and knowledge levels, current behaviours in skin cancer prevention, levels of sunburn etc.
* Research what other organisations are undertaking in skin cancer prevention that might work in your organisation.
* Clarify and understand your legal obligation and duty of care to workers
* Consult workers and their representatives – ask their opinion on what is needed in the workplace, what current gaps are and possible solutions to address those gaps.
* Develop a skin cancer plan to set out the annual workplan of your framework – what will you work on this year? What is the priority? What did your research tell you? What is the most pressing need? What do your workers think? What budget do you have? What is the main message for this year?
* Raising awareness and providing training is essential to different categories of staff. Who do you need to train?
* Link training and education to on-going monitoring from consultation and surveys for messaging and behaviour change
* Consider induction, management training, supervisor training, toolbox talks, peer to peer training, early detection training, messaging to bring home to family and friends.
* Use a variety of training methodologies and tools – know your audience, how do they like to receive training and in what format?
* Use different media channels available e.g. newsletter, flyers, leaflets, posters, e-mail alerts, text messages, pay slip notes, guest speakers.
* Use family events, competitions, UV smart incentives, personal stories, famous people’s stories and so on.
* Encourage staff to check their skin regularly and to attend their GP if they have any concerns.
* Staff should be made aware of the various pigmented lesion clinics around the country and other dermatology options to have skin lesions reviewed.
1. **Training and Education**

**4. Protection Control Measure**

1. **Engineering Controls**
* Shade can be natural or artificial from permanent or portable structures.
* Shade should be provided for break times if working in shade is not possible, however portable shade options may be considered. An option may be to relocate jobs to take advantage of existing shade if possible.
* Soft and rough or natural surfaces e.g. grass and soil reflects less solar UV than hard and/or smooth surfaces.
* Dark colours reflect less solar UV; therefore painting a surface darker will help.
* Clear or tinted films applied to the sides of windows can substantially reduce the amount of solar UV transmitted into a vehicle.
1. **Administrative Controls**
* Plan outdoor work tasks to be carried out when solar UV is lower.
* Plan work around shade availability or indoors when solar UV is high.
* Move tasks to a shaded area or indoors when possible.
* Rotate staff on outdoor tasks to reduce exposure.
* Use the solar UV index to support this action.

**C. Personal Protective Equipment**

* This includes sun protective work clothing, hat, sunglasses or safety glasses and sunscreen.
* For clothing choose – medium to dark fabrics, UPF50+ protection rating, long sleeves and pants, natural fibres or close weave e.g. cotton, check clothing is not worn as thin material will allow UV through.
* Hats – shades the face, head, neck and ears. UPF50+ protection rating, tight weave fabric, wide- brimmed – bucket or legionnaire style, hard hats and helmets can have attachable brims and neck flaps attached.
* Sunglasses – should reflect solar UV, close fitting wraparound style sunglasses are best with 100% UVA and UVB protection
* Sunscreen – A broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30+, with high UVA protection, and water resistant should be used. Apply sunscreen every 2 hours and 20 minutes before going outdoors. On average an adult body needs 7 spoons of sunscreen to cover the body properly. Sunscreen should be easily accessible to workers and expiry dates checked regularly. No sunscreen offers 100% protection from solar UV; it should be used alongside other protective measures such as clothing and shade.
* SPF30 lip balm should be used on the lips.
* Involve workers in selecting protective clothing and hats, sunscreen etc. Trial different methods and gather feedback on what works for different workers.
* Use managers/supervisors as role models.

**5.** **Policy**

* Understand the Health & Safety legislation where employers have a duty to protect their outdoor workers from solar UV rays.
* This policy should detail why and how solar UV radiation risk will be managed in the organisation.
* The policy should detail all aspects in the solar UV protection framework and staff should receive training on the policy.
* This policy should be reviewed annually in line with other policies.
* This policy should linked to other policies as relevant e.g. Health and Safety, Health and Wellness etc.

**6. Monitoring**

* An annual work plan should be developed by the skin cancer prevention working group.
* The annual work plan should be monitored for achievements/progress/challenges etc.
* Ongoing research should be conducted with workers to monitor shifts and trends in attitudes, knowledge and behaviours from baseline measures.
* Ongoing surveys, questionnaires, feedback should be sought from workers and management to monitor your work plan.
* Consider all costs associated with your annual work plan and ring fence budget accordingly.
* Ensure on-going awareness for staff of the annual work plan, use all communication channels available to publicise widely.
* Document all elements of the process of your annual work plan including planning, implementation and evaluation.
* Record all actions in detail for reviewing the plan; this will identify successes and challenges.
* Solar UV protection data may also be gathered in Health and Safety inspections or supervisor checklists, onsite reviews etc.

**References:**

1. National Cancer registry. Cancer incidence projections for Ireland 2020-2045. Cork: NCRI; 2019.

2. International Agency for Research on cancer. Radiation Volume 100D; A review of human carcinogens. Lyon: IARC: 2009.

3. Skin Cancer Prevention Plan (2019-2022). Department of Health, 2019.

4. Skin cancer and outdoor work. A work health and safety guide p.3. Cancer Council Australia, 2018.