

Sun and heat safety

Purpose:

To promote safe working practices for horticulture and agriculture workers during hot weather.

Why:

To help reduce the risk of health issues and fatalities caused by sun exposure and excessive heat.

TIAH Capability Framework area:

This aligns with the knowledge and skills in the Health and Safety area.
<https://tiah.org/tiah-capability-framework>

Talk leader instructions:

- Prepare to do the talk in a suitable/quiet location with no distractions
- Consider using some of the resources as part of the talk, e.g. showing a video
- Engage with participants, ask questions and give everyday examples
- Conclude with a brief review
- Get everyone to sign the form. Make sure to write the name of the farm and the date. Keep a copy in your Health and Safety records
- Ensure all participants have access to a copy of this document to refer to once the session has finished. This could be electronic and emailed or printed

Notes:

Background

Research by the European Heatshield project and Loughborough University showed that 50% of agricultural workers started their shifts already dehydrated.

Working during hot or sunny weather can cause health issues if you don't take steps to protect yourself. In some cases, the outcome can result in skin cancers or even death.

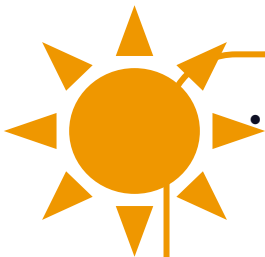
Anyone who works outdoors is particularly at risk. However, anyone working within a protected environment such as a glasshouse or polytunnel where temperatures may increase during hot spells, can also be affected by heat and dehydration. Risks can increase for older or pregnant workers, anyone with an underlying medical condition and those taking regular medication.

Skin type can also affect how your skin reacts to the sun.
Find out what skin type you are: <https://www.tribecamedspa.com/fitzpatrick-skin-type-chart/>



Main learning points

8 minutes



- Sun exposure causes 99 per cent of non-melanoma skin cancer and up to 65 per cent of malignant melanoma skin cancer.
- Up to 80 per cent of UV rays can penetrate clouds
- One in every three cancers diagnosed is a skin cancer
- Up to 90 per cent of skin cancer deaths could be prevented if exposure to UV is controlled

Three main health issues

Q: There are three main health issues associated with heat and sun that you should be aware of. What do you think they are?

The three main issues are

1. **Heat stress** – This is when the body's way of controlling its internal temperature starts to fail. Factors including working temperature, work rate, humidity and work clothing may lead to heat stress.
2. **Dehydration** – This is when the body lacks enough water to work properly. Water makes up two-thirds of the human body – It's essential for survival.
3. **Sun exposure** - Too much sunlight is harmful to your skin. Although you may think a tan looks healthy, it's a sign that your skin has been damaged. This damage is caused by ultraviolet (UV) rays or solar radiation.

Notes:

Suggestions/ ideas:

Q: What do you think the signs of heat stress are?

- An inability to concentrate
- Sweating – which can cause dehydration
- Core rising body temperature
- Muscle cramps
- Heat rash
- Severe thirst – a late symptom of heat stress
- Fainting or feeling faint
- Heat exhaustion – fatigue, dizziness, nausea, headache, moist skin
- Heat stroke – hot dry skin, confusion – leading to convulsions and loss of consciousness. If not detected early, this can result in death.

Q: What do you think are the signs of dehydration?

- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling tired or weak
- Headache
- A dry or sticky mouth
- Sunken eyes
- Urinating less than usual and having dark-coloured urine
- Confusion or drowsiness
- Having a weak or rapid pulse

Q: What do you think are the signs of sun exposure?

- Red, warm and tender skin
- Swollen skin
- Blistering skin
- Headache
- Fever
- Nausea
- Fatigue

Discussion points



10 minutes

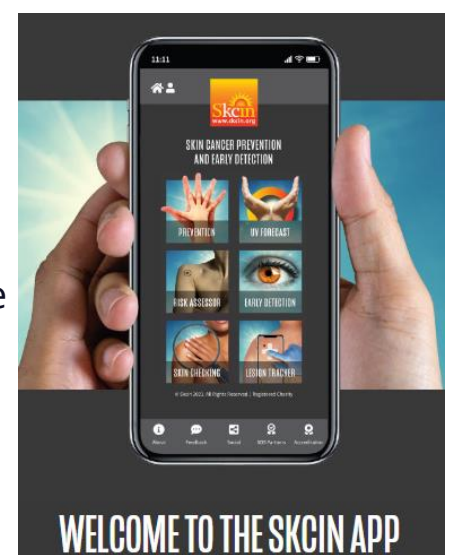
Employers have a moral and legal obligation to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, the health of their employees, including providing, information, training, instruction or supervision and carrying out a risk assessment. This also includes the risk from UV radiation.

As an employee, you also have a responsibility to take care of your own health and cooperate with your employer's efforts to help keep you safe.

Q: What steps should you take to minimise the risk from heat stress, dehydration and sun exposure?

Responses might include:

- Follow workplace sun protection procedures or policies
- Attend training and follow instructions and advice
- Use any supplied sun protection equipment or use your own
- Use a high-factor sunscreen of at least SPF 15 on any exposed skin
- Wear a hat – ideally with a wide brim
- Wear UV protection sunglasses
- Check your skin for any unusual moles or spots. See a doctor promptly if you notice any changes in size, colour, itching or bleeding
- Cover your skin with lightweight clothing – if you need to wear overalls for your work, you could wear lightweight clothing underneath. Ideally, choose breathable fabrics such as cotton
- Where possible use fans or air conditioning (if working indoors or in vehicles)
- Try to minimise exposure to heat or UV rays by taking breaks or working in the shade for example
- Check the UV index on a weather forecast App such as the MET Office
- Download an App to help prevent and detect early signs of skin cancer – for example, the **Free Skcin App**: <https://app.skcin.org/>



Notes:

- Drink water frequently throughout the day in small amounts (to compensate for the effects of sweating)
- If working in high temperatures, try to drink before and after your work and throughout the day. Water is your best option, but fruit squash, tea or coffee are also acceptable. The recommended amount of water is 25 ml every 15 minutes.



Important: If a healthcare professional has advised you to restrict the amount of fluid you can have, it's still important to keep hydrated. Seek their professional advice for guidance on your recommended daily intake.

Free sun safety information

Skcin.org have a series of sun safety posters and leaflets for you to **download here for free:** <https://www.skcin.org/contact/usefulDownloads.htm>

You could pin them on your staff notice board to remind your team of the importance of sun safety.



Suggestions/ ideas:

What tips could you give to someone to help them drink more water?

Responses might include:

1. **Set a reminder** – Set an alarm or reminder on your phone
2. **Make it social** – When you have a break or sit down with someone, make it a habit to have a drink of water together
3. **Make it enjoyable** – If you're not keen on plain water, infuse it with natural flavours such as lemon, cucumber, ginger or berries – or you could add sugar-free cordial or squash
4. **Eat hydrating foods** – Including foods with a high water content in your diet will also help to keep you hydrated and provide a good source of vitamins and minerals: cucumber, celery, watermelon, strawberries and tomatoes.
5. **Be proactive** – Start rehydrating as soon as you can. Keep sipping water until your urine is pale and clear. This is especially important during hot weather.

Summary/Wrap-up

 1 minutes

It’s important for anyone working outdoors or in warm temperatures to understand the risks from UV rays, extreme heat and dehydration and to know how to help minimise these risks to prevent a health situation or emergency. It’s also important for employers to understand the risks, understand their responsibility and legal duty of care to their employees.

Resources:

- Skcin.org: Sun safety charity:** <https://www.skcin.org/>
- HSE: Outdoor workers and sun exposure:** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/sunprotect.htm>
- HSE: Temperature in the workplace – Dehydration:** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/dehydration.htm>
- HSE: Temperature in the workplace – Heat stress:** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/heat-stress.htm>
- Sun Safe Workplaces: Employers Legal Obligations:** <https://www.sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk/legal-obligations>
- Iosh: Sun safety:** <https://iosh.com/guidance-and-resources/business/preventing-occupational-cancer/sun-safety#:~:text=Use%20heavy%20duty%20cover%20or,breaks%20out%20of%20the%20sun>
- British Heart Foundation: Dehydration: signs, causes and tips to drink more water:** <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/medical/signs-of-dehydration#tips>
- Cancer Research UK: Skin cancer:** <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/skin-cancer>

Toolbox Talk participants

Toolbox Talk: Sun and heat safety

Name of farmDate

Talk leader name.....

Name	Signature	Date