

TOOLBOX TALK NO.3

Working in the Sun



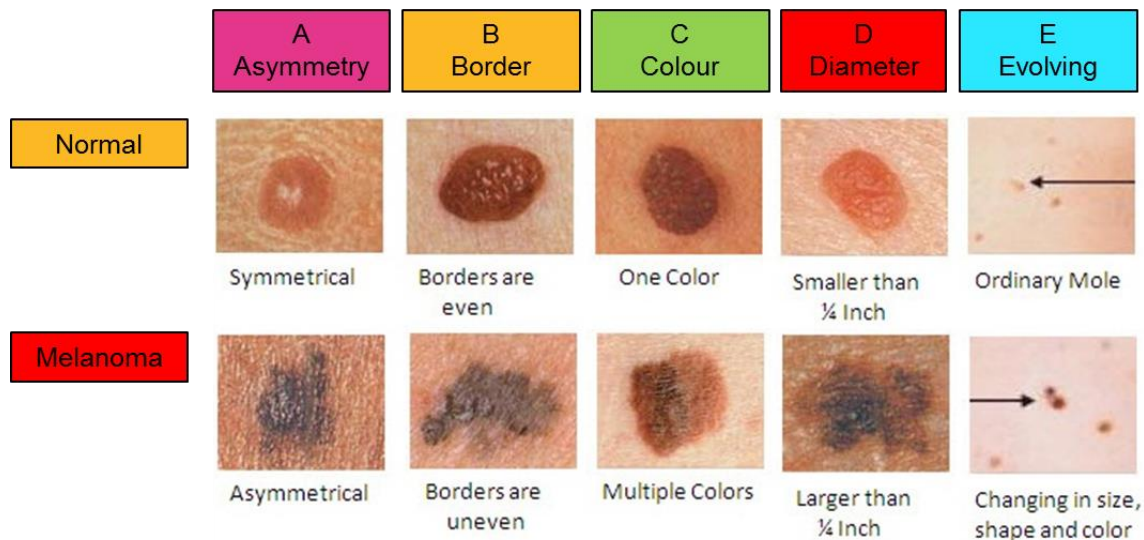
A sunny day usually makes most people feel good but too much sunlight can actually damage the skin. It is not simply sudden exposure while on holiday that is harmful. Even a tan that has been built up gradually can be harmful to health. A tan is a sign that the skin has been potentially damaged.

Skin damage is caused by ultraviolet rays in sunlight. People whose jobs keep them outdoors for a long time, such as construction, may, if their skin is unprotected, get more sun on their skin than is healthy for them. They will then be at a greater risk of developing skin cancer.

Skin Cancer

In the short-term, excess exposure of unprotected skin to the sun can cause blistering and peeling. Even mild reddening of the skin is a sign of skin damage. In the long term, too much sun will speed up ageing of the skin, making it leathery, mottled and wrinkled. However, the most serious issue is an increased chance of developing skin cancer.

There are two main types of skin cancer: **malignant melanoma**, which is less common but more serious and **non-melanoma**, which is very common but not as serious.



Periodic checking of the skin

The first warning sign is often a small scabby spot that does not clear after a few weeks. Workers should be instructed to look for changed or newly formed moles or any skin discoloration. Workers should pay particular attention to any growths that appear on the face, especially around the eyes and nose, or on the back of hands.

If these signs are noticed, medical assistance should be sought. Many of these symptoms prove to be non-cancerous, but they need to be checked to be absolutely sure.

Sunscreen should be standard equipment for anyone working in construction during spring and summer. Keep a bottle handy in your toolbox. Protect your skin from UV rays – Cover up, REST in the shade and apply sun cream

Identify Controls:

1. Wear a shirt and long trousers to **cover** most of your skin.
2. Protect the rest of your skin with **sunscreen**. Use SPF 30 or higher. Follow the instructions about how often to reapply. Don't forget your ears. The more you sweat, the more often you need to reapply sunscreen.
3. **Protect your eyes**. Wear safety sunglasses if the tint doesn't interfere with your vision.
4. Where possible, work in the **shade**.

**SAFETY AS
STANDARD**

Heat stress?

- Heat stress occurs when the body is unable to cool itself by sweating. It can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Symptoms include:
Headache, dizziness, light-headedness, fainting, weakness, moist skin, mood change, irritability, confusion, nausea, vomiting

What to do?

- Seek immediate medical attention
- Move to a cooler area
- Loosen or remove heavy and hot clothing
- Drink water
- Fan and mist with water



Heat exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the excessive loss of water and salt
Through excessive sweating and/or dehydration

Warning signs: Moist, possibly cold skin, dilated pupils, exhaustion/weakness

Emergency actions: Rest in cool, shady area and loosen clothing, drink plenty of water, cool the body down with cool air movement or cool water, obtain medical help **NEVER GIVE ANYTHING BY MOUTH TO AN UNCONSCIOUS PERSON.**

Heat stroke

This is a serious heat related illness capable of causing death or disability if emergency medical treatment is not given. The symptoms of heatstroke can progress over a couple of days, but develop more quickly when accompanied with physical activity.

Warning signs: Dry, hot skin, constricted pupils, very high body temperature, convulsions or collapsing

Emergency actions: Move person to cool area and provide drinking water if conscious. Remove outer clothing and cool body with water. Place person on side and in recovery position if unconscious and vomiting. Monitor breathing. **NEVER GIVE ANYTHING BY MOUTH TO AN UNCONSCIOUS PERSON.**

Question:

Can the reflection of the sun off a wet pavement or snow be just as damaging as the direct summer sun?
(A: Yes)

Hot weather working

Working in conditions where temperatures rise significantly can be dangerous and lead to the following:

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat stroke
- Skin cancer
- Fatigue
- Dehydration
- Loss of concentration
- Thermal discomfort
- Potential for increase of accidents.

WATER. REST. SHADE – PREVENT DEHYDRATION

DEHYDRATION

Monitor your urine colour throughout the day and adjust the water intake to help stay hydrated.

Signs of Dehydration; Thirst, dizziness, headache, tiredness, dry mouth/lips, concentrated dark urine, & loss of strength & stamina;

If dehydration is constant it can cause damage to your kidneys, liver & muscles. The most important factor is to maintain good hydration. Start work well hydrated and drink water regularly throughout the day. Check the colour of your urine to assess your hydration levels.



The recommended amount of water per day is 2-3 litres

PREVENTION

1. USE SUN PROTECTION CREAM
2. MONITOR YOUR HYDRATION LEVELS
3. DRINK WATER
4. TAKE BREAKS REGULARLY
5. ACCESS TO COOL AND CLEAN DRINKING WATER
6. AVOID SKIPPING MEALS

Be SUN SMART

PUT ON A LOOSE FITTING SHIRT

PUT ON SUNSCREEN

PROTECT YOUR HEAD

PROTECT YOUR EYES

TAKE REGULAR BREAKS AND REST IN THE SHADE