
Sun Safety for Field Workers

1.0 Objective & Intent

The objective of this Sun Safety for Field Workers SOP is to establish mandatory protocols that protect employees from the acute and chronic health effects of solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure and heat stress during outdoor work. This procedure is designed to comply with WorkSafeBC requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) Part 4 – General Conditions, specifically addressing the duty to identify and control hazards related to harmful physical agents. The specific risk mitigated includes sunburn, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and the increased lifetime risk of skin cancers such as melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and squamous cell carcinoma.

2.0 Operational Scope

This procedure applies to all field workers, supervisors, and any personnel performing outdoor work for the cabinet and millwork manufacturing company, including but not limited to installation crews, delivery drivers, site surveyors, and maintenance staff working at external job sites, lumber yards, or outdoor storage areas. It covers all tasks performed between 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM during the months of April through September, and any other period when the UV Index is 3 or higher as forecasted by Environment Canada.

3.0 Hazard Identification & Mandatory PPE

- UV Radiation Exposure: Direct sunlight and reflection off surfaces (concrete, metal, water) causing skin and eye damage.
- Heat Stress: High ambient temperature, humidity, and physical exertion leading to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Dehydration: Inadequate fluid intake during prolonged outdoor work.
- Mandatory PPE: Broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 minimum, water-resistant) applied to all exposed skin.
- Mandatory PPE: CSA-approved wide-brimmed hat (minimum 7.5 cm brim) or hard hat with a brim and neck flap.
- Mandatory PPE: UV-protective safety glasses or wraparound sunglasses meeting ANSI Z87.1 standards.
- Mandatory PPE: Long-sleeved, lightweight, light-coloured clothing made of UV-protective fabric (UPF 50+ recommended).
- Mandatory PPE: Full-length pants (no shorts) to cover legs.

4.0 Required Safety Equipment & Tools

- Broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 minimum, water-resistant) – company-supplied in dispensers or individual bottles.
- Personal hydration system (e.g., insulated water bottle or hydration pack) with a minimum 1-litre capacity.
- Portable shade structure (e.g., pop-up canopy, umbrella) for rest breaks.
- Cooling towels or misting fans for active cooling during breaks.
- First aid kit with electrolyte replacement packets and instant ice packs.
- UV Index monitoring device or smartphone app (e.g., WeatherCAN) to check real-time UV levels.

5.0 Step-by-Step Safety Procedure

1. Before leaving the shop or office, check the Environment Canada UV Index forecast for the work location. If the UV Index is 3 or higher, or if the work period falls between 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM from April to September, proceed with full sun safety protocols.
2. Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 minimum) to all exposed skin, including face, neck, ears, arms, and hands, at least 20 minutes before sun exposure. Ensure even coverage and do not miss areas behind the ears or under the chin.
3. Don all mandatory PPE: wide-brimmed hat or hard hat with neck flap, UV-protective safety glasses, long-sleeved UPF 50+ shirt, and full-length pants. Verify that clothing is lightweight and light-coloured to reflect heat.
4. Fill your personal hydration system with cool water and carry it with you at all times. Aim to drink 250 mL (1 cup) of water every 15-20 minutes during active work, even if not thirsty.
5. Set up a portable shade structure at the worksite for rest breaks. Position it in a location that provides continuous shade throughout the day, away from reflective surfaces.
6. Schedule work tasks to minimize peak UV exposure: perform heavy physical labour in the early morning or late afternoon when possible. Rotate workers through shaded rest breaks every 45 minutes during high UV periods.
7. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours, or immediately after heavy sweating, toweling off, or if it has been wiped away. Set a timer on your phone or watch as a reminder.
8. Monitor yourself and co-workers for signs of heat stress: headache, dizziness, nausea, excessive sweating, confusion, or hot dry skin. If any symptoms appear, immediately move to the shade, drink water, use a cooling towel, and notify your supervisor. If symptoms worsen, call 911.
9. At the end of the shift, inspect your skin for any redness or sunburn. Report any incidents of sunburn or heat-related illness to your supervisor and document it in the company incident reporting system (SafeDesk) within 24 hours.
10. Clean and store all reusable PPE and equipment. Dispose of sunscreen containers properly. Refill hydration systems for the next day.

Regulatory Disclaimer: This document is a generic safety template provided for educational and informational purposes only. It does not constitute professional engineering, legal, or regulatory compliance advice. The end-user assumes all liability for validating all safety protocols against specific machinery manufacturer manuals and local occupational health and safety regulations (e.g., WorkSafeBC, CSA standards) before deployment.