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Keeping **outdoor workers** safe in the sun: What **employers** need to know



WHAT DID WE DO?

Cancer Council NSW conducted a literature review of workplace sun protection intervention effectiveness.

Four systematic reviews and **46 publications** were included.



WHY IT MATTERS?

- Australia has the highest skin cancer rates globally, with melanoma incidence.
- Skin cancer accounts for 80% of all new cancers in Australia and costs over \$2.5 billion annually.
- Outdoor workers receive up to 10x more UV exposure than indoor workers, increasing their risk of skin cancer.
- Outdoor workers include all people who work outside, whether they are paid or unpaid, and across diverse industries.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?



Employer Responsibilities

- State-based safety legislation provides the framework to protect the health, safety and welfare of all Australian workers.
- Employers are legally and ethically obligated to:
 - Identify sun exposure hazards and apply control measures
 - Implement sun safety policies aligned with national guidelines
 - Provide protective gear
 - Prioritise outdoor tasks during lower UV periods when possible
 - Educate workers on UV risks and protection strategies

Effective Interventions

Research identifies five key success factors for workplace sun safety programs:

- **Leadership & Culture:** Senior management support and workplace champions drive adoption.
- **Beyond Policy:** Policies must be supported by education, environmental changes and leadership.
- **Sustained Multicomponent Programs:** Combining policy, education, PPE and environmental controls yields the best results.
- **Worker Involvement:** Participatory and flexible approaches enhance relevance and compliance.
- **Education:** Training, visual materials and peer-led sessions improve knowledge and behaviours.

Employers have a legal and ethical duty to protect workers from sun exposure by:

- Providing education on UV as a hazard
- Using safety measures to protect workers
- Ensuring compliance with health regulations

CALL TO ACTION



Employers should:

- Integrate sun safety into WHS systems.
- Use multicomponent strategies for sustained impact.
- Apply the Hierarchy of Control to reduce UV exposure.
- Foster a sun-safe culture through leadership and storytelling.
- Leverage resources from Cancer Council NSW.
- Ensure legal compliance to avoid liability and protect workers.



Aboriginal Respect Symbol. Designed by
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