

SunSmart workplaces:

Agriculture, horticulture and landscaping

Small changes can make a big difference.

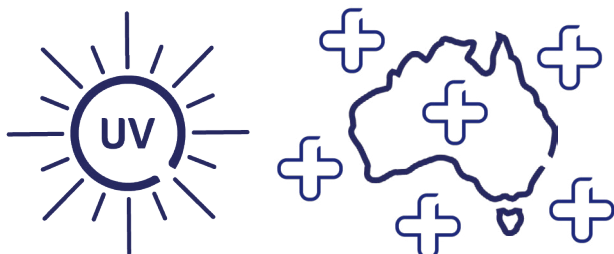
Farmers, farm workers, gardeners, groundskeepers, nursery staff, and landscapers often spend long hours working outdoors. As outdoor workers - people who perform paid or unpaid duties outside as part of their role - they are regularly exposed to hazards such as ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Over time, this ongoing exposure can significantly increase the risk of skin cancer.

Under work health and safety laws, employers have a **legal responsibility** to provide a safe workplace and to eliminate or minimise health risks, including UV exposure. Reducing this risk starts with practical action. By making small changes such as planning tasks around peak UV times, providing shade and PPE, rotating tasks and modifying reflective surfaces where possible - workplaces can make a meaningful difference in protecting workers' health.



Why sun safety at work matters

Exposure to UV radiation is a leading cause of skin cancer in Australia.



Every year in Australia it's estimated that over **200** melanomas and **34,000** other skin cancers are caused by **UV exposure in the workplace**.

Workers in agriculture, horticulture and landscaping may face increased UV exposure due to:

- working outdoors for long periods
- limited shade in open environments such as fields, farms and worksites
- reflective surfaces such as water, soil, turf, sand and metal equipment
- seasonal work peaking during warmer months
- physically demanding work that can make sun protection uncomfortable.

UV damage can occur **even on cool or cloudy days**, and exposure builds up over time.



Small steps to create a more SunSmart workplace

Sun safety at work is a shared responsibility that starts by employers creating a supportive environment. Improving sun safety doesn't require major changes – simple adjustments to planning, equipment and everyday routines can help reduce UV exposure risks.

Plan work to reduce exposure

- ✓ **Schedule outdoor tasks** such as planting, harvesting, mowing or landscaping earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon where possible.
- ✓ **Rotate tasks** where practical to reduce long periods working in direct sun.
- ✓ **Consider UV exposure** when planning daily work schedules.

Make shade part of the workday

- ✓ **Encourage breaks** in shaded areas or sheds.
- ✓ **Use temporary shade structures** for rest or meal break where natural shade isn't available.
- ✓ **Use vehicles or machinery cabins** where possible. Encourage the use of tractors, vehicles or machinery with covered cabins to reduce direct sun exposure.

Support workers to protect themselves

- ✓ **Require sun-safe workwear** including wide brimmed hats, long pants, long sleeves and sunglasses.
- ✓ **Provide SPF 50+ sunscreen** in areas where workers take breaks, including in vehicles and sheds, and encourage reapplication.

Build sun safety into your workplace

- ✓ **Review current practices** using this handy [online assessment](#).
- ✓ **Create and implement a SunSmart policy** - there's a [template](#) to help you.
- ✓ **Encourage staff to share practical ideas** that make sun safety easier in their daily routines.



Photosensitivity is when certain chemicals, plants, or medications make your skin more sensitive to the sun, increasing your risk of burning and skin cancer. For workers in agriculture, landscaping and horticulture, there are some common substances to be aware of including:

- **Coal tar derivatives:** anthracene, phenanthrene, pitch, creosote
- **Dyes:** acridine, fluorescin, erythrocin, rhodamine, bromofluorescein, methylene blue, rose bengal, eosine
- **Chlorinated hydrocarbons:** chlorobenzols, triphenyls, diphenyls
- **Plants:** bergamot, fennel, St John's Wort, chrysanthemum, bind weed, fig, dill, lime, buttercup, lemon.

(Source: Safe Work Australia Guide to Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation 2019)

Organisations should consider exposure to these substances as part of risk planning.

Take action today

Check out the [SunSmart Workplaces toolkit](#) for practical, ready-to-use resources to reduce UV risk at work. The toolkit provides templates, risk assessment guides, and sun safety resources to help you make smart changes. Use it to keep your workers protected while meeting your workplace safety responsibilities.

Visit www.cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart-workplaces for more information.

