

# Safety – Initiative

## 07 – SUNSCREEN, HEAT STRESS AND DEHYDRATION.

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#### 1. Objective of the initiative

To ensure all persons on site are aware of the dangers of excessive exposure to the sun / UV radiation and heat.

#### 2. Overview.

**SUNSCREEN** - Very simply, sunburn and UV light can damage your skin, and this damage can lead to skin cancer. There are of course other determining factors, including your heredity and the environment you live in. However, both the total amount of sun received over the years, and overexposure resulting in sunburn can cause skin cancer.

Remember, skin cancer is very slow to develop. The sunburn you receive this week may take 20 years or more to become skin cancer.

If there is a history of skin cancer in your family, you are probably at a higher risk. People with fair skin, with a northern European heritage appear to be most susceptible.

The level of UV light today is higher than it was 50 or 100 years ago. This is due to a reduction of ozone in the earth's atmosphere (the Ozone Hole). Ozone serves as a filter to screen out and reduce the amount of UV light that we are exposed to. With less atmospheric ozone, a higher level of UV light reaches the earth's surface.

**HEAT STRESS & DEHYDRATION** – Heat stress occurs when your body can not control its internal temperature. The body reacts to heat by increasing the blood flow, carrying heat to the skins surface and by sweating, which cools the body as the sweat evaporates.

Someone wearing protective clothing and performing heavy work in hot and humid conditions could be at risk of heat stress due to the restriction of sweat evaporating by the type of clothing worn, and the body gaining more heat than it can lose causing the body's temperature to rise until control measures start to fail.

#### 3. Implementation

All sites are to promote this initiative through a toolbox talk and display on the site health and safety notice board.

## 4. Effects of Exposure on the Body

### SUNSCREEN

- Reddening and blistering of the skin
- Pain and tightening of the skin
- Tissue damage
- Dehydration

### HEAT STRESS & DEHYDRATION

- Heat rash
- Muscle cramps
- Headache
- Severe thirst
- Heat Exhaustion – moist skin, fatigue, nausea, giddiness and headache.

Heat Stroke – hot dry skin, convulsions and loss of consciousness

## 5. Risks from the Sun

- Sunburn damages the skin cells including DNA
- Skin cancer
- Ageing of the skin
- Loss of consciousness

Painful sunburn once every two years triples the risk of skin cancer.

## 6. Precautions

### SUNSCREEN

- Apply sunscreen with at least a SPF-30 or higher, to all areas of the body which are exposed to the sun. GBM sites are to ensure there is an adequate supply of sunscreen available for all personnel.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, even on cloudy days. Reapply after swimming or perspiring.
- Wear clothing that covers your body and shades your face. (Hats should provide shade for both the face and back of the neck.)
- Wear sunglasses (combined safety glasses where required) offering a minimum of UV400
- Tell your colleagues if you suspect they are getting burned.

- Avoid exposure to UV radiation from sunlamps, sun beds and sun showers

#### HEAT STRESS & DEHYDRATION

- Personal protective equipment, - wear breathable light-weight materials staying within the required parameters.
- Regulate the length of exposure to hot environments – rotate tasks to reduce exposure and take regular breaks.
- Drink water frequently to prevent dehydration by replacing the body's water lost through sweating.
- Monitor the health of workers more at risk – those with pre-existing medical conditions, on medication, with heart conditions or pregnant women as they may be more susceptible to heat stress.

### 7. Personal Health Surveillance

8. Be aware of changes to your skin pigmentation, moles and blemishes.
9. Be aware of the effects of the sun and heat listed in section 5.
10. Report symptoms to your manager.
11. Consult your doctor with any concerns.
12. Report to your manager if the condition is work related.



Site Manager		Contract Name		Date	
<b>07 – SUNSCREEN, HEAT STRESS AND DEHYDRATION.- TBT</b>					
Name of Personnel	Signature	Company			