Sun protection

List jobs with highest UV exposure.

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Explain dangers

At some point, we've all been burned by the sun.

Sunburn is the effect of ultraviolet (UV) radiation on the skin. Ultraviolet light is beaming down on us every day, and always has. But now there's less protective ozone in the atmosphere and risks of exposure have increased.

UV rays are more powerful than visible light rays. They're so powerful that they can cause cancer.

Ultraviolet radiation can also cause cataracts, other eye damage, and premature aging of the skin.

When you work in the sun, especially in spring and summer, you need to minimize the hazards of UV exposure.

Identify controls

- Wear a shirt and long pants to cover most of your skin.
- 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.
- Protect your eyes. Wear safety sunglasses if the tint doesn't interfere with your vision. (Most safety glasses—clear or tinted—decrease your UV exposure.)
- Avoid contact with substances known to cause photosensitization, such as coal tar.
- SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. Multiply the SPF number by 10 to know how many minutes you can stay in the sun without burning.
- Use a UV-blocking lip balm too.
- Remember: Sunlight doesn't have to be direct to do damage. Light reflected off surfaces such as sand, water, concrete, and snow can also cause UV exposure.
- Sunscreen should be standard equipment for anyone working outdoors during spring and summer. Keep a bottle handy in your toolbox.

Did you know?

Weather reports now include a UV index. This gives you an idea of how intense the ultraviolet radiation will be under clear sunshine or light cloud.

When the index is high (7 or higher) you can get sunburned in only 15 to 20 minutes.

The highest exposure of the day is from noon to 2 pm.

Demonstrate

Pass around bottle or tube of sunscreen (30 SPF or higher) and ask crew to apply it to exposed skin.