



KENTISH COUNCIL POLICY

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Number 02:31:2012

POLICY NUMBER	02:31:2012
OBJECTIVE	To reduce the risk and protect workers from ongoing exposure to ultraviolet radiation (solar UVR) by providing essential support and sun protection control measures which are designed to maximize worker sun protection.
STATUTORY AUTHORITY	Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 Workers Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 1998
POLICY	Adopted 16 October 2012 Minute 11.1.1 Updated 20 October 2015 Minute 11.4.2
REVIEW	This policy will be reviewed every two years.

RATIONALE:

¹Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia. More than 430,000 Australians are treated a year for skin cancers. Of these, over 10,500 new cases of melanoma are diagnosed. Each year there are around 1850 deaths from melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer. Australia and New Zealand have the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.

The major cause of skin cancer is too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Skin can burn in as little as 15 minutes in the summer sun so it is important to protect your skin from UV radiation.

¹ Courteously of the Cancer Council Australia website



1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out the responsibilities of both Council and Council workers in relation to minimising the exposure of workers to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) and heat illnesses.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies when a SunSmart alert has been issued. SunSmart alerts are issued where the UV (solar) index is predicted to be 3 or greater.

This policy is applicable to Kentish Council in all of its operations and functions, including those situations where employees, volunteers and contractors are required to work outdoors for, or on behalf of Council.

3. HEALTH EFFECTS

Overexposure to UV radiation causes skin and eye damage, sunburn, tanning and can result in skin cancer.

Sunburn occurs when too much UV radiation affects the skin. Skin turns red within two to six hours of being burnt. It will continue to develop for the next 24 to 72 hours. If enough UV exposure has occurred to cause sunburn, the damaged skin may become more sensitive to infrared radiation (heat). Sunburn at any age, whether serious or mild, can cause permanent and irreversible skin damage that can lay the groundwork for skin cancer later in life.

Eye damage related to UV exposure includes photoconjunctivitis, which is also known as snow blindness or welders flash, photokeratitis, macular degeneration, cataracts, pterygiums and skin cancer of the conjunctiva and skin surrounding the eye.

Premature ageing including skin wrinkling, sagging, blotchiness and roughness is caused by exposure to UV radiation.

4. UV INDEX

The UV index is a simple and informative method of describing the daily danger of solar UV radiation intensity.

The values of the UV index range from zero upwards. The higher the number, the stronger the levels of solar UVR and the less time it takes for damage to occur.

The World Health Organisation recommends that when the UV level reaches three or higher, a combination of sun protection control measures may be needed to eliminate or minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, exposure to solar UVR.



5. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

5.1 SunSmart Alert

The SunSmart UV Alert, produced by the Bureau of Meteorology, predicts when sun protection is required.

Council workers will be advised that a SunSmart alert has been issued via:

- Notice boards at works depot and council office.
- Communicated daily at morning toolbox talks.

5.2 Reorganisation of work

Where practical, workers and their Supervisors will:

- Plan to work indoors or in the shade during the middle of the day when UV radiation levels are at their strongest.
- Plan to do outdoor work tasks early in the morning or later in the afternoon when UV radiation levels are lower.
- Develop work share procedures to ensure that outdoor tasks are rotated between workers to ensure that the same person is not always out in the sun.

5.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The wearing of PPE is compulsory for all workers, including contractors and inspectorial staff.

The following items of PPE are required:

- Long trousers
- Long sleeve shirts with a collar
- Broad brimmed hats that cover the face, head, ears and neck
- Tinted safety glasses that meet Australian Standards
- Sunscreen – broad spectrum, SPF30+, water resistant

Council will provide staff with appropriate PPE for protection against UV radiation. It is each person's responsibility to ensure they use the PPE provided to comply with the requirements of this policy.

5.4 Sunscreen

No sunscreen offers 100% protection from the sun's UV rays. Sunscreen should always be used in conjunction with other forms of protection like hats, sunglasses and clothing.

For sunscreen to be effective, ensure it is applied 20 minutes before going outside to give the protective elements in sunscreen time to bond to your skin. Do not rub it in, a light film should stay visible.

Reapply at a minimum of every two hours during times of moderate to extreme UV radiation ratings.



Sunscreens available for Kentish Council staff:

- Generic High Sun Protection Factor (SPF) broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen and lip cream 30+.
- For Council employees who may have allergic reactions to generic sunscreens or those who may have concerns about the use of generic sunscreens, Council will supply organic non-nanoparticulate sunscreen.

5.5 Other controls

- Where possible, have meal and tea breaks in the shade.
- Ensure adequate drinking water is available.
- Increase fluid intake to reduce the risk of heat illness.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 General Manager

- Shall give clear instruction and understanding to staff in relation to meeting legislative requirements, directives and policies of Council.

6.2 Department Managers

- Ensure that all persons within their charge are fully conversant and compliant with the requirements of this policy.
- Ensure that adequate resources are available for the purchase and supply of PPE to meet the requirements of this policy.

6.3 Supervisors

- Ensure that all persons within their charge are fully conversant and compliant with the requirements of this policy.
- Determine UV radiation index levels on a daily basis and inform all persons within their charge at morning toolbox talks.
- Regularly monitor employee compliance and report any difficulties experienced to their Manager.
- Ensure that any deliberate and ongoing non-compliance with this procedure is dealt with under Council's discipline procedures.
- Ensure that any incidence of sunburn or excessive exposure is reported via Council's incident reporting procedure.

6.4 Risk Management & Work Health Safety Officer

- Shall ensure that all persons having an obligation to comply with this policy are given clear instructions, guidance and support to enable compliance.
- Shall assist in ensuring compliance with this policy.

6.5 Workers (including contractors)

- Ensure that they are fully conversant and compliant with the requirements of this procedure.
- Shall check the daily UV index information provided on the notice board and be proactive with compliance to the alert.
- Correctly wear and use PPE and clothing during work hours.
- Must not intentionally misuse or damage PPE.