

EXPOSURE TO SUN AND HEAT POLICY

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Responsible Officer:	Manager People & Culture
Owner:	People and Culture
Responsible Director:	Corporate Performance
Relevant Legislation/Authority:	AS/NZS 4801 Relevant Australian/New Zealand Standards Occupation Health and Safety Act 2004 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
DOCSETID:	3412214

1. PURPOSE

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) requires that employers must provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to health for all employees and any contractors they employ. The OHS Act also requires that employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety. Employees must co-operate with the employer on any action the employer needs to take to maintain a safe and healthy working environment.

The City of Greater Bendigo (the City) is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment. In the context of this policy, this commitment is demonstrated through:

- Promoting an understanding of the effects of heat and ultra violet (UV) exposure and supporting practices to reduce exposure to heat and UV radiation
- Working to eliminate, or reduce so far as is reasonably practical, the risk of exposure to heat and UV radiation
- Defining appropriate clothing to be worn when working outside for protection from UV radiation and to avoid excessive heat exposure

2. BACKGROUND

The City recognises the hazards of UV radiation and heat exposure and their potential effects on those exposed, and has developed an appropriate policy and expectations regarding safe work behaviour and control measures (Appendix 1). The City encourages safe work practices and will aim to ensure that employees who undertake work outdoors are provided with adequate training and information, personal protective equipment (PPE), clothing and strategies to minimise the risk of exposure.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to the City's employees (permanent, temporary and casual), volunteers, students and contractors.

4. DEFINITIONS

Heat-related illness – a range of progressive heat-induced conditions that occur when the body cannot sufficiently cool itself.

Outdoor work – work undertaken at a City workplace that is located outdoors, including roles for which the majority of working hours are in a truck cabin/street sweeper/car.

Workplace - City premises and any premises or location a City employee, volunteer, student or contractor attends in the course of work or during any work-related function or event.

UV radiation - the wavelength of sunlight that can damage the skin. The level of UV radiation varies depending on the time of the year and the proximity to surfaces such as concrete and metal, which can reflect and scatter UV radiation.

UV Rating/Index – international standard measurement of the strength of UV radiation from the sun at a particular place on a particular day. In Victoria the UV High Risk Period is from September to April, or when the UV rating could be high (6 and above). On a clear summer's day, it can take only 10 to 15 minutes for skin damage to occur. See *Table 1. UV Rating/Index*. However, sun protection in Victoria is recommended by WorkSafe for any time of the year when the forecast UV index is ≥ 3 .

Table 1. UV Rating/Index

UV Index	Description
0–2	Low danger from the sun's UV rays for the average person
3–5	Moderate risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure
6–7	High risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure
8–10	Very high risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure
11+	Extreme risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure

5. PRINCIPLES

This policy aims to protect the health of employees, volunteers, students and contractors by, so far as is reasonably practicable, minimising exposure to UV radiation and heat in and around the City's workplaces.

6. POLICY

6.1. Working in Heat

Working in heat can be hazardous and can cause harm to employees. Heat-related illness is a progressive condition and if left untreated it can be fatal. Conditions and symptoms include:

- Heatstroke - characterised by confusion, inability to think clearly, passing out, collapsing, or having seizures (fits)
- Heat exhaustion
- Dehydration
- Heat rash
- Heat cramps
- Fainting
- Reduced concentration

If someone has severe heat exhaustion, or heat stroke, call an ambulance immediately and perform first aid until the ambulance arrives.

For the early stages of heat-related illness, first aid can often be effective, but always seek medical assistance if in doubt, or if the person's symptoms are severe. For further information on first aid treatment see *Managing the Risks of Working in Heat* (Section 9).

There are several key factors that need to be considered when determining if there is a risk of heat illness in the workplace

- Air temperature
- Humidity (in the environment or workplaces such as laundries and mines)
- Radiant heat (from the sun or other sources such as furnaces and ovens)
- Air movement or wind speed
- Workload (nature of the work and duration)
- Physical fitness of the worker (including acclimatisation and any pre-existing conditions, e.g. overweight, heart/circulatory diseases, skin diseases or use of certain medicines)
- Clothing (including protective clothing such as overalls, coveralls and suits worn during insecticide spraying)

If significant heat-related stress is identified as likely around a task or within a position description, a risk assessment should then be undertaken and the risks eliminated or minimised as much as reasonably practicable. Contact the Work Health and Safety (WHS) team to arrange a risk assessment.

6.2. UV Radiation

UV radiation can be hazardous and can cause harm to employees. Exposure to UV radiation is known to cause adverse health effects on the skin, eyes and immune system. All skin types can be damaged by exposure to UV radiation. Damage is permanent and irreversible and increases with each exposure. Cumulative exposure to UV radiation can damage the body's skin cells. This can result in various forms of skin cancer which can be fatal if not detected and treated early.

Early diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer relies on early detection. Employees (especially those who spend all or part of their day performing outdoor work) are encouraged to check their own skin often and look for spots that are new or have changed colour, size or shape. Employees should see a doctor (GP or dermatologist) as soon as possible if they notice anything unusual as skin cancer can develop rapidly.

6.3. Effective forms of heat and UV protection

In some cases control measures can minimise the risk of both heat-related illness and exposure to UV radiation. These include:

- changing work schedules to allow heavy work to occur during cooler times of the day—this may also coincide with the times when UV radiation is less intense e.g. early in the morning or late in the afternoon
- providing shade for outdoor work
- having rest breaks in cooler, shaded or indoor areas
- having extra breaks
- providing loose fitting, lightweight, full length clothing for air movement and sun protection, and
- rotating employees between cooler, shaded tasks and hot outdoor work.

The most effective way of reducing heat and UV radiation exposure is to use a combination of controls.

Additional controls to minimise the risk of heat-related illness include providing cool drinking water near the worksite and using mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion.

Additional controls to minimise the risk of UV radiation include providing hats, sunglasses and sunscreen.

Sun protection is recommended all year round for outdoor workers to reduce the risk of cumulative UV exposure. A person sitting in a vehicle can receive significant exposure to UV radiation.

For further information on how to apply these controls in the workplace and expectations regarding safe work behaviour, see Appendix 1.

7. SUPPORT

The WHS Team within the People & Culture Unit can provide advice on this policy and will facilitate training specific to this policy where required. Further advice or clarification is available from people managers.

Voluntary skin checks will be provided by the City. Ordering of sunscreen to be provided by the City is the responsibility of individual units. Further information on the preferred supplier is available from the WHS Team.

Other resources regarding sun and heat exposure can be found in *Section 9 – Related Documents*

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone at the City has a responsibility to:

- Cooperate and abide by the agreed systems of work in place to minimise risk of exposure
- Undertake work in a manner that minimises the negative impact of environmental factors
- Wear, use and correctly maintain all PPE and notify their people manager of any damage or loss

- Return any PPE items to their people manager when leaving the position and/or organisation
- Attend relevant training as offered to assist in meeting their obligations under this policy
- Report incidents involving weather-related effects (including symptoms of sunburn and heat-related illness/distress) using the organisation's Hazard / Incident Notification Form – see DOCSETID 3405573

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the City's Managing Underperformance Procedure and/or Managing Misconduct Procedure.

PEOPLE MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The City's people managers also have a responsibility to:

- Where reasonably practicable, ensure work systems are designed to minimise risk of exposure
- Plan work in a manner that minimises the negative impact of environmental factors
- Ensure appropriate controls are implemented where exposure to environmental extremes are likely to occur
- Provide access to personal protection controls including, but not limited to, clothing, head covering, sunglasses and sunscreen
- Ensure incidents involving weather-related effects (including symptoms of sunburn and heat-related illness/distress) are treated as incidents and reported using the organisation's Hazard / Incident Notification Form – see DOCSETID 3405573
- Lead by example and model positive and constructive behaviour
- Actively monitor their workgroups and intervene if they become aware of any potential or actual unsafe work practice/breach in the workplace
- Address breaches of this policy
- Provide information, instruction, training and/or supervision as is necessary to enable employees to perform their work in a way that is safe and without a risk to health
- Ensure that all the City's employees attend training organised to assist them to meet their obligations under this policy

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES' (HSRs') RESPONSIBILITIES

Health and Safety Representatives have a responsibility to:

- Be actively involved in developing strategies to improve work methods and protection of employees from exposure to UV and heat
- Monitor control measures against these hazards in consultation with employees and supervisors of work groups.
- Report matters specific to the improvement of this policy to the WHS Team within the People & Culture Unit for consideration and recommendation for action by the H&S Committee.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Employees are encouraged to access the related internal documents which are available on the intranet and/or external resources which are available as per the below.

These include:

- Corporate Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment Policy (DOCSETID 1339526)
- Managing Misconduct Procedure (DOCSETID 2172947)
- Managing Underperformance Procedure (DOCSETID 2172943)
- Hazard / Incident Notification Form (DOCSETID 3405573)

Further information on sun protection for employees and working in heat is also available from the resource documents below:

- *Guidance note: Working in heat, Worksafe, July 2012*
- *Guide on Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR), Safe Work Australia, August 2013*
- *Information about: Sun protection for outdoor workers, Worksafe, August 2016*
- *Managing the risks of working in heat, Safe Work Australia, December 2017*

Further information or advice on this policy should be directed to the People & Culture Unit.

10. HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights of Responsibilities Charter.

11. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Business Unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made through consultation with the staff Consultative Committee and with the approval of EMT or where required, resolution of Council.

12. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date Approved	Author	Unit	Change Type	Version	Review Date
Nov 2012	P&P (Risk)	People & Performance	Initial (UV and Heat Policy)	1	Nov 2014
Oct 2015	P&P (Risk)	People & Performance	Review (title changed from UV and Heat Policy)	2	Oct 2019
April 2018	P&C (WHS)	People & Culture	Review (for consistency with Corporate Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment Policy)	3	April 2022

Appendix 1

Control Measures

Re-organising work to avoid the UV peak of the day

Where you can, and the work schedule permits, try to:

- Minimise the amount of outdoor work
- Move jobs undercover
- Do outdoor tasks in the early morning or late in the day
- Share outdoor and indoor work to minimise individual exposure

Providing natural or artificial shade

If there is no natural shade, have a barrier to reduce UV radiation by erecting temporary shade structures, for example:

- Awnings - generally made from closely woven fabrics that have a rating of Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) 50+
- Market-type shade "umbrellas" - provide strong protection due to dense weave and may be plastic coated (plastic is a strong absorber of UV radiation). Most material would have a UPF rating of 50+
- Structures using shade cloth - UPF ratings may be low to moderate

Clothing

Clothing should be used to protect as much skin as possible whilst still being practical and providing protection from heat effects. The levels of UV protection provided by clothing increases with the density of the fabric's weave. Darker colours absorb more UV radiation than lighter colours of the same fabric. Outdoor shirts must be collared with long sleeves. Shorts are prohibited for outdoor work as per the Corporate Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment Policy (DOCSETID 1339526).

When selecting clothing:

- Refer to the UPF rating, which should be on the label, and choose clothing with the highest rating. As per WorkSafe guidance, a fabric rating of 50+ should be chosen wherever possible
- Consider appropriate fit and comfort. Sun protection garments are available in lightweight, comfortable fabric
- To improve comfort in hot conditions, breathing panels and ventilation should be incorporated into the design of the garment where possible

Hydration

Daily water intake must be balanced with losses to maintain total body water. Losing body water can adversely affect your functioning and health. It's important to note that individual fluid needs differ depending on your sweat rate, the environmental temperature, your clothing, humidity and other factors.

To minimise the risk of heat-related illness, the following measures must be considered:

- Keeping people away from hot processes
- Allowing workers to acclimatise
- Providing cool drinking water near the work site. During hot weather, workers should be encouraged to drink a cup of water (about 200 mL) every 15 to 20 minutes, and not rely solely on soft drinks or caffeinated drinks
- Providing PPE such as reflective aprons and face shields for reducing exposure to radiant heat
- Providing workers with information, instruction and training on recognising heat-related illness and on first aid. Adequate supervision of workers is also required
- Providing first aid facilities and access to medical help

- Monitoring fluid loss by checking the colour of your urine. It should be pale yellow and not dark yellow

Hats

On outdoor sites where safety helmets (hard hats) are mandatory, additional sun protection, in the form of detachable brims or shade flaps, must be used during outdoor work to protect the face, ears and neck.

On outdoor sites where safety helmets are not required, hats are mandatory and must have a broad brim of minimum 8cm, or be of a bucket style with a deep crown, sitting low on the head with an angled brim at least 6cm long. All hats should have a UPF rating of 50+. Peaked baseball-style caps are not effective sun protection and are not acceptable.

Exemptions

As discussed in Section 4, sun protection in Victoria is recommended when the forecast UV index is ≥ 3 , which is generally from September to April. Sun protection is recommended all year round for outdoor workers to reduce the risk of cumulative UV exposure. The UV peak of the day is recognised as being 11am to 3pm during daylight saving and 10am to 2pm at other times.

It is therefore deemed reasonable for outdoor workers to wear beanies (or similar), or head-protective apparel, without protective brims or flaps during early mornings from the beginning of April to the start of September. However, brimmed hats, and safety helmets with brims or shade flaps, must be worn from 10am onwards, as this is still considered a UV peak period outside daylight savings.

Although classed as outdoor workers, roles for which the majority of working hours are in a truck cabin/street sweeper/car are exempt from the requirement to wear a brimmed hat while undertaking said work in a truck cabin/street sweeper/car.

Notwithstanding the above, it is recommended that daily pre-start checks of the forecast UV index be undertaken to assess the requirement for sun protection. There are a range of mobile phone Apps that enable checks to be quick and reasonably practicable.

Sunglasses

Choose close-fitting, wrap-around style sunglasses (or sunglasses with side shields) that comply with Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067: 2003 – *Sunglasses and fashion spectacles*. Refer to the label and select sunglasses offering UV protection and have an Eye Protection Factor (EPF) 10 rating.

For tasks where safety glasses are required, either tinted or clear safety glasses would provide adequate sun protection provided that they comply with Australian Standard AS/NZS 1337:1992 – *Eye protectors for industrial application*. An alternative would be the provision of safety glasses in the form of sunglasses that provide good UV protection.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen will be provided by the City and should always be used with other sun protection control measures. For best results with sunscreen:

- Select a type labelled "broad spectrum Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30+ and water resistant" for maximum protection
- Apply liberally to all areas of exposed skin, 20 minutes before going outside to ensure it is absorbed by the skin. A thin application will reduce the protection level by up to a half
- Reapply every two hours to clean, dry skin, or more frequently if perspiring or in contact with water