



# OSHA Warns Against Sun Damage

Did you know that the number of new cases of skin cancer and the number of deaths caused by the most serious type of skin cancer are rapidly rising in the United States? This is particularly troubling since the numbers for most cancers have been declining. Sunlight is the main source for ultraviolet radiation (UV) known to damage skin and to cause skin cancer. The amount of UV exposure depends on the strength of the light, the length of exposure, and whether the skin is protected. There are no safe UV rays or safe suntans.

This information and more is found on a pocket card issued by OSHA. It is called the *Sun Card: Protecting Yourself Against Harmful Sunlight*, OSHA publication 3166. This pocket card is advisory, not a new standard or regulation, and is intended to give advice to outdoor workers.

According to OSHA, workers who spend time outdoors should protect themselves from UV radiation by wearing protective clothing that does not transmit visible light: broad-brimmed hats that protect the face, ears and neck; and sunglasses that block UV rays. Workers also should frequently apply sunscreen with a sun-protection factor (SPF) of 15

or higher and seek shade, if possible, when the sun's intensity reaches its peak—between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Sunlight, which can cause eye damage, premature aging of the skin and skin cancers, such as melanoma, is the main source of UV radiation. Melanoma accounts for more than three-fourths of deaths related to skin cancer each year, though most skin cancers can be cured if detected early enough.

Outdoor workers with fair skin and hair, freckles, or numerous or irregular moles, are especially susceptible to sun damage. Even a few serious sunburns can increase the risk of skin cancer.

DoD personnel can access the pocket card from the OSHA web site at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) (see *publications*) or write the OSHA Publications Office, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-3101, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. You also can request the card by calling (202) 693-1999.

For more information on harmful effects of the sun, go to the American Cancer Society's web site at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's site at [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)

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