



# Sun Safety

## Background Information

[www.workwell.health.nz](http://www.workwell.health.nz)

### Overview

Most [skin cancers](#) are caused by exposure to ultra violet radiation (UVR) in sunlight. Sun exposure, particularly severe sunburn, before the age of 20, gives rise to a greater risk of skin cancer later in life and can cause damage to the eyes.

There are two main types of skin cancer – melanoma and non-melanoma. Melanoma is the most serious kind of skin cancer. Non-melanoma skin cancers are more common but less serious if they are treated in time.

### Implications for health and wellbeing

[Melanoma](#) is the fourth most common cancer in New Zealand. Prolonged sun exposure causes damage to the skin, which can be permanent and irreversible and increases with each exposure. All skin types can be damaged by exposure to UVR.

### Sun Safety in New Zealand

[Skin cancer statistics](#) indicate that:

- Over 300 people die from melanoma every year
- NZ has one of the highest melanoma death rates in the world
- There are more than 2000 new cases of melanoma and 67,000 of non-melanoma each year
- It has been estimated that, for every death from skin cancer, an average of 17.4 potential years of life are lost.

### In the workplace

The law states an employer must take all practicable steps to protect their employees' health and safety ([Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992](#)). If you have employees working outdoors, you must protect them from injury by the sun.

When it comes to health and safety in the workplace, prevention is far better than cure. Employers should identify UVR exposure hazards and take measures to reduce them, in consultation with health and safety representatives and employees.

### Key Messages

- New Zealand and Australia have the highest rates of melanoma in the world
- Early identification of a melanoma can lead to earlier and more effective treatment
- Following the [Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap](#) recommendations and avoiding the sun light when UV is at its strongest can help prevent sun damage
- Promoting sun safety in the workplace through a healthy culture and providing protective equipment can support your employees to protect themselves



# Sun Safety

## Background Information

[www.workwell.health.nz](http://www.workwell.health.nz)

### **Incorporating Sun Safety into your Workplace**

Your efforts to promote and support sun safety in the workplace should consider a multi-level approach to ensure it is effective and sustainable. A multi-level approach involves considering what is available at each of the following levels:

- Organisational (Policies and procedures)
- Environmental (Infrastructure and facilities)
- Individual (Opportunities, information and training)