

Parks & Recreation Sun Protection Policy Guidelines



Introduction

Skin cancer is considered epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over one million Americans are expected to get skin cancer this year. That's more people than the grand total of all who will get cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, and colon. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight causes 90 percent of all non-melanoma skin cancer. Risk for skin cancer can be greatly reduced when certain precautions are practiced.

It is prudent for park and recreation directors to establish a sun-safety policy to protect staff and patrons from excessive sunlight, and to avoid potential liability and litigation stemming from subsequent blistering sunburns, dehydration, heat illness, and skin cancer. This document is designed to assist administrators as they create sun-protection guidelines for their specific venue and circumstances.

Some statements presented in this sample policy may prove impractical and may need to be modified or totally omitted from the guidelines administrators develop. The goal is to adopt as many of the sun-safety principles and strategies as possible, according to their feasibility. The policy created should cover both recreation activities as well as employee outdoor work duties.

Following are the basic tactics for preventing skin cancer. On the next page the sun-safety tips are translated into guidelines for outdoor activities.

Basic Personal Strategies for Preventing Skin Cancer

1. Reduce exposure to sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (10 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the winter), as practical.
2. Wear full-coverage clothing when outside in sunlight including four-inch full-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and full-length pants (weather permitting).
3. Use sunglasses that state they protect from 99-100 percent of UVA and UVB. A UV-protective coating can be added to prescription glasses.
4. Apply full-spectrum (UVA & UVB) sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater) to exposed skin, 15 minutes before going outside in the sun.
5. Use lip balm with a SPF of 15 or greater.
6. Seek shade when outside in the sun.

Suggested Guidelines for Outdoor Work or Recreation

1. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will be scheduled before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m., from March through October. The availability of shade will be considered when planning such activities during these time frames.
2. For all outdoor activities occurring on sunny (non-rainy) days – especially between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – patrons and staff will be encouraged to:



A. Work or play in shaded areas, when practical.

B. Wear full-coverage clothing that includes:

- (1) four-inch or more full-brimmed hats that create a shadow which completely covers the head, face, nose, ears, and neck. (Flappy-jacks, patterned somewhat like a baseball hat with neck flaps, may prove a practical solution).
- (2) long-sleeved shirts and full-length pants made of tightly woven fabric that is lightweight.

C. Wear sunglasses that protect from 99-100 percent of UVA & UVB (full-spectrum).

D. Fifteen minutes before going outside, apply a SPF 15 or greater broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB), water-resistant sunscreen to exposed skin. Re-apply sunscreen at least every two hours.

E. Use lip balm with a SPF of 15 or greater.

3. A program committee or other appointed group, following an established timetable, will develop and implement a plan to place trees and/or construct shelters that provide shade for protecting people who engage in outdoor activities occurring at (site name). (Note: In most cases, the preferred location for providing shade will be along or in close proximity to the borders of recognized recreation areas or sports fields. This will allow patrons and staff to easily access shade when they are not actively participating in the activities.)
4. Parents or guardians will be encouraged verbally and through written communications to provide the above described (choose...) hat, full-length clothing, dark glasses, lip balm, and sunscreen.
5. Sun-protection training and materials will be provided to staff and patrons encouraging them to practice sun safety while participating in P & R activities/job duties or engaging in outdoor pastimes.
6. While on duty, staff are encouraged to practice sun-safety principles/strategies to protect themselves and serve as good role models for patrons, especially children.
7. These guidelines will be communicated and reinforced to staff and patrons through verbal reminders, posters, signs, pamphlets, notices, newsletters, and meetings, etc., and above all, on-site PRACTICE.
8. Safety staff will conduct an annual review of the sun-safety policy and the degree to which employees practice skin cancer prevention behaviors.

Additional Skin Cancer Prevention Resources

1. UV Index: The UV Index predicts the concentration of ultraviolet radiation that will hit the indicated zip code area on a given day. The higher the number, the stronger UV rays will be. This index can be daily communicated to outdoor workers to remind them to take sun-protection precautions.



To locate the UV Index, go to the following internet site,
http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/stratosphere/uv_index/index.html
 An interpretive chart will explain the significance of the generated number.

2. OSHA provides an on-line pocket card entitled, "Protecting Yourself in the Sun." Go to, <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3166.pdf>.

Avoid Heat Illness

In addition to UV rays, the sun emits heat which – at higher temperatures – can cause heat exhaustion, heat stroke, heat cramps, and other undesirable conditions. In rare cases, overheating can cause death.

To learn more about why and how to prevent heat illness, go to
<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3154.html>.

For more information, you may also contact the following organizations:
 The Skin Cancer Foundation at 1(800) SKIN-490 or www.skincancer.org
 The Center for Disease Control and Prevention at 1(888) 842-6355 or
<http://www.cdc.gov/Chooseyourcover>
 The American Cancer Society at 1(800) ACS-2345. or www.cancer.org

Skin Cancer Prevention

- Reduce sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest. (This is especially important from mid-spring through mid-fall.)
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat (at least 4-inch brim) that produces a shadow that covers the eyes, nose, face, ears, and neck.
- Wear tightly-woven, loose-fitting clothing that covers as much of the body as possible, weather permitting.
- When feasible, stay under shade (trees, physical structures).
- Wear sunglasses that include a warranty stating that they provide 99 – 100 percent UVA and UVB (broad-spectrum) protection. Prescription glasses can have an UV-protective coating applied to the lens.
- Liberally apply sunscreen to exposed skin 15 minutes before going outdoors. The sunscreen container should specify a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above and should state that it provides broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection. Look for mexoryl, zinc oxide, or z-cote in the active ingredients list to help assure maximum sunscreen effectiveness. Depending on outdoor conditions, sunscreen should be reapplied at least every two hours.
- Individuals with sensitive skin may want to test a new sunscreen on a small portion of skin to see if any negative reactions occur within 24 hours.
- Use lip balm with a SPF of 15 or greater.
- Avoid tanning salons, booths, and sunlamps.

CAUTION! Don't depend on sunscreen alone to protect you from skin cancer. Instead, rely as much as possible on a combination of all the tips listed.





Crew supervisors should model sun-protective behaviors. Employees may want to utilize a skin cancer prevention “buddy system” to reinforce and support their commitment to practice sun safety. Skin cancer prevention education materials should be taken home by employees to encourage their children and spouses (as applicable) to adopt sun-protective behaviors.

On a personal level, employees should use a hand mirror to perform a self skin examination every one to three months to check moles and other possible signs of skin cancer as previously described. See a dermatologist if you suspect any problems. Visit www.skincancer.org to view pictures of skin cancer. Click on the name of the specific skin cancer you want to see. Also check out the website’s “self-examination” section.

Skin Cancer Treatment

Eighty to 90 percent of skin cancers are treated with surgery. Other solutions include radiation therapy, electrodesiccation (tissue destruction by heat), cryosurgery (tissue destruction by freezing), laser therapy, and drug therapy.

Description of California Department of Health Services - Skin Cancer Prevention Program

The Skin Cancer Prevention Program (SCPP), a unit within the California Department of Health Services, produced the module *Sun Safety Kit for Outdoor-Based Businesses* which includes this fact sheet. Distribution of this kit is part of a larger campaign to increase public awareness and practice of recommended sun-safety behaviors. SCPP utilizes education modalities, policy development, and media productions to advance its objectives. The primary target groups are children under 14 years of age, their parents and other care providers, along with outdoor workers. If you have questions or comments about skin cancer or this kit, please contact the SCPP at:

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 P O Box 997413, MS-7204
 Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

(916) 449-5393 Telephone
 (916) 449-5415 Fax

Email: amanthe@dhs.ca.gov

Web: www.AvoidSkinCancer.com

Remember to protect the skin you're in!



Wear a hat!



Cover up!



Wear UV-protective sunglasses!



Seek shade!



Put on sunscreen!