Sun Protection and Outdoor Workers

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Agenda
The Health Case
The Business Case
Workplace Strategies
Policy
Skin Cancer

- An important public health issue accounting for a third of all new cancer diagnoses
- One of the few cancers that can be prevented
- Few workers identify employers as a source of information about sun protection*

Skin Cancer Incidence

- Has almost doubled in the last 20 years
- Estimated 75,500 cases of non-melanoma in 2010
- Estimated 5,300 new cases of malignant melanoma in 2010
Why Outdoor Workers?

*Canadian National Survey on Sun Protective Behaviours: Outdoor Workers (2000)* found:

- 61% forgot to take sun protection actions
- 54% found them inconvenient
- 38% wanted to get a tan
- 34% are unconcerned about the sun
- Less than half seek shade
From Research We Know Outdoor Workers:

- Work at midday when ultraviolet (UV) rays are peaking
- Spend many years in their occupation and may also spend recreation time outdoors
Skin Cancer Risk - Carex

• Carex estimates the number of people potentially exposed to workplace hazards

• In B.C., solar radiation is the most common workplace carcinogen
UV Radiation

- Small part of electromagnetic radiation spectrum
- Invisible to the eye
- Divided into three categories
  - UVA, UVB, UVC
  - UVC is not involved in causing skin cancer
Ultraviolet Radiation

**UVA**

- Damages dermis layer of skin
- Leads to sun induced aging
- Present throughout the year
Ultraviolet Radiation

**UVB**

- Damages the epidermis (outer layer of the skin)
- Main cause of sunburn
- Intense during summer months
Reflected UV Exposure

- In late winter and early spring, fresh snow can increase the amount of UV radiation you receive by 85%.
- Water, sand, snow, and concrete can reflect UV radiation.
Long Term Effects of Sun Exposure

• Skin cancer

• Eye cancer, cataracts

• Weakening of the immune system

• Wrinkles, sun spots
Skin Cancer - 3 Types

- Basal Cell
- Squamous Cell
- Malignant Melanoma
Basal Cell Cancer

• Accounts for 60-70% of skin cancers

• Grows slowly & rarely spreads

• If left untreated can extend to underlying tissue or bone
Squamous Cell Cancer

- Accounts for 30-40% of skin cancers
- Occasionally can spread rapidly
- Develops on exposed parts of the body, face, neck, forearms and back of hands
- Outdoor workers at high risk
Malignant Melanoma

• More related to burning

• Most severe type

• Occurs in a younger age group

• Usually distinguished by a dark brown discoloration mixed with various other colours
Risk Factors

- Blonde, red, light-brown hair
- Light-coloured eyes
- Freckles easily
- Large number of moles
- Family history
Risk Factors

• Long periods of daily sun exposure

• Short periods of intense sun exposure

• Tendency to burn

• Use of tanning beds
Sun Safety Risk Assessment Activity
Sun Safety Risk Assessment

• Can be used as a safety audit tool

• Results can be used to make the business case

• An awareness activity for employees to assess their personal risk
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Scoring

• >10 you are at risk for short and long term skin damage

• >15 you are at high risk for skin damage

There is a serious need for preventative actions
The Business Case: Costs and Benefits

*Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (2010)*

- The estimated cost of skin cancer in Canada for the year 2004 is $531,750,000 - over half a billion dollars
- The average melanoma client loses 28 days from work
The Business Case: Costs and Benefits

• Non-melanoma skin cancer accounts for an average of 14-21 days missed from work

• UV radiation may also cause eye cancer, cataracts, weakening of the immune system, and medication reactions
Activity
Making The Business Case
Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

• In Ontario, as of 2002, 45 workers have been compensated including postal workers and construction workers

• In B.C., from 2002 to 2010, 6 workers have been compensated including a gardener, plasterer and boomboat operator
Workplace Messages

- Ontario Ministry of Labour: Ultraviolet radiation in the workplace
- Canadian Dermatology Association
Seek Shade

Seek shade between 11a.m. and 4p.m.

• Limit the amount of time you spend outdoors

• Seek shade from buildings, trees, canopies, especially during lunch and coffee breaks

Wear the Gear

Wear sun-protective clothing

• Choose long pants and long sleeve, collared shirts

• Wear clothing that covers as much of the body as possible. Fabrics which do not let light through and are loose and comfortable are best.
Head Coverings

Wear a broad brimmed hat

• A hat should cover your head, face, neck and ears
• A width of 8 cm or 3 inches for the brim
• Construction helmets can be altered by adding a glare guard under the peak of your hard hat, attaching a back flap and or/visor to a construction helmet
Sun Screen

Apply SPF 30+ sunscreen and lip balm

- Use a broad spectrum (UVA and UVB), water-resistant sunscreen
- Apply 20 minutes before going outside
- Reapply at least every 2 hours
Sunglasses

Slide on sunglasses

• Go for close-fitting, wrap-around styles that are UV-absorbent safety glasses

• Sunglasses used for different purposes are specified in the CSA Standard Z94.5-95, "Non-prescription sunglasses"
Stretch Break
Workplace Strategies Activity
Health Promotion

• Awareness Raising

• Skill Building

• Environmental Support

• Policy
Workplace Strategies

- Business
- Management
- Employees
Considerations for Business

- Recognize employees are at risk
- Plan for training opportunities
- Consider buying sun protective clothing
- Alter work assignments where possible
- Consider sun protection policy
Considerations for Management

- Be aware of all work that places an employee at risk
- Model behaviour
- Provide training about sun protection
- Distribute/encourage sun protection equipment
- Provide shaded areas
- Schedule tasks indoors at high UV times, where possible
Considerations for Employees

• Cooperate with measures

• Wear the gear

• Act as role models

• Be responsible for your own sun protection
Policy Development Considerations

• Get buy in
• Recruit a good team
• Gather information
• Draft a policy
• Implement the policy and monitor
Sun Protection is important for company events!

- BBQ's
- Golf tournaments
- Outdoor events, picnics
Consultation Services

• Resource support

• Meet with your workplace to discuss strategies for employers and employees

• Phone and face to face consultation related to policy
Conclusions

• Students
• Seasonal workers
• Males vs females
• "In order to be effective, these strategies must include both enhanced workplace policies and practice, and increased individual use of sun protection."

Thank-you!

Please fill out the evaluation!
References


