

HR 013: UV, PPE & CLOTHING

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Objective

To protect the health, safety and welfare of all Shire employees. To reduce the incidence of skin cancer amongst workers who are exposed to UV rays by providing adequate protection.

Policy

Introduction

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world with at least 1 in every 2 Australians diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime. Western Australia has the second highest rate of skin cancer in Australia. Although skin cancer is a serious public health issue it is one which can largely be prevented (Cancer Council WA).

Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) from the sun has been identified as the major cause of skin cancer. Outdoor workers are at risk of getting skin cancer because of their high exposure to UV rays over extended periods of time. Most skin cancers can be prevented and when detected early can be successfully treated in 95-99% of cases.

Responsibilities

All Shire employees are responsible for their own personal health, safety and welfare. In addition they must avoid adversely affecting the safety or health of any other person through any act or omission. They are required to co-operate with their employer in the interest of health, safety and welfare in accordance with *Occupational Safety and Health Act of WA (1984)*.

Scope

This policy applies to all Shire of Esperance employees, contractors, volunteers and work experience students who work in an environment where they are exposed to UV rays. Shire employees shall be provided with personal protective equipment and clothing to reduce the risk of exposure to UV rays. Employees of contractors, volunteers, and work experience students are to comply with this policy and are to wear suitable protective clothing, either supplied by their employer or personally.

Employer Responsibilities

The *Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984 - WA* states that employers must as far as practicable provide and maintain a working environment in which employees are not exposed to hazards.

- Provide and maintain equipment needed to protect outdoor workers from the sun.
- Set up systems of work to reduce the amount of time employees spend in the sun.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision.

The employer must also ensure that employees comply with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) requirements through supervision.

Supervisor/Manager Responsibilities

Responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of field employees under their control and to ensure compliance with the Shire's UV Policy.

Employee Responsibilities

An employee must, while at work, co-operate with his or her employer or other person so far as is necessary to enable compliance with the *Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984 – WA*, the *OSH Regulations WA 2005* and the Shire's OSH policies and procedures.

For example, an employee must wear protective equipment/clothing issued for their health and safety.

Under Section 20(2)(c) of the *Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984 - WA* an employee who damages or misuses PPE provided in the interests of safety or health, commits an offence. Shire of Esperance employees who misuse or damage PPE will face disciplinary action that may include placing their employment in jeopardy. For example employees must not modify any PPE issued to them,

Clothing Protection

Shire outside employees working in an environment exposed to UV rays will wear the following protective clothing and personal protective equipment at all times, when working during daylight hours:

- Long sleeved Shirts (50+UPF).
- Long trousers or long shorts.
- Sun protective hats.
- Wrap sunglasses (dark safety glasses AS1337).
- Broad spectrum Sunscreen SPF 30+ or above.

Long Sleeve Shirts/Long Trousers

Shirts worn by employees deemed to be conducting tasks predominantly outdoors, shall be high visibility, close weave and loose fitting to allow for air circulation and comfort. Shirts must have long sleeves and collars, and shall include Shire identification.

Long trousers worn by employees shall be loose fitting, made from at least 50% cotton or natural fibre and of close weave.

NOTE: Staff who are predominately based indoors that are required to work outdoors whilst conducting specific tasks such as supervising, inspection and other activities determined from time to time as outdoor work, may be permitted to wear short sleeved shirts at the discretion of their Director. Outside staff permitted to wear short sleeve shirts or long shorts are required to apply SPF30+ or above sunscreen to areas exposed to the sun i.e. arms and legs.

Sun Protective Hats

A sun protective hat is one that shades the face, head, ears and neck. Broad brimmed hats, bucket hats or legionnaire style hats provide the best protection and must be worn. A hat with a wide brim reduces the amount of UV radiation reaching the face by 50%.

Bucket hats should have a deep crown, sit low on the head and have an angled brim of at least 6 cm,

Broad brimmed hats are required to have a broad brim measuring no less than 7.5 cm in width as recommended by the WA Cancer Council.

Legionnaire hats should have a flap that covers the ears and back of the neck to the collarbone/shoulder. The side flap and front peak should overlap to protect the side of the face.

Sunglasses (dark safety glasses)

Dark safety glasses shall conform to Australian Standard AS/NZS 1337 and offer 99% protection from ultraviolet rays.

Employees that wear prescription glasses can be provided with a pair of over-glasses which will protect their prescription glasses. The Shire will only provide prescription safety glasses in special circumstances.

The Shire will provide up to one replacement pair of dark safety glasses in a calendar year. Replacement of safety glasses will only be provided when the broken pair is returned to the Purchasing Officer. If additional replacement glasses are required, it will be at the discretion of the Director Asset Management who will take into account whether the previous glasses had been fairly treated.

Sunscreen

No sunscreen can provide 100% protection. Always use sunscreen in conjunction with clothing, hats, sunglasses and shade.

Sunscreen will be provided to all staff that are required to work outdoors. To provide the best protection a sunscreen that is at least 30+ SPF, broad spectrum and water resistant will be provided.

To be effective, sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before going out in the sun, and be applied generously so that it goes on easily and evenly and be reapplied every two hours to replace sunscreen which has been wiped, perspired, washed off or otherwise removed.

Sunscreen should be kept in a cool place. Do not keep in glove box of vehicles. If sunscreen is to be kept in a vehicle, place in a most suitable place such as an esky or lunch box.

Do not use expired sunscreen. Discard and replace any sunscreen that has passed its expiry date. Provision of low allergy sunscreen will be made available to individuals who are allergic to certain sunscreens.

Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The following items will be supplied on an individual needs basis:

- Safety Glasses/Over glasses/Goggles;
- Sun protective hats;
- Hard Hats;
- Hearing Protective Muffs;
- Hearing Protective Plugs;
- Dust Masks;

- Gloves;
- Safety Footwear;

and any other safety equipment recommended by WorkSafe WA.

Clothing - Replacements on a 'Fair Wear & Tear' Basis

The Shire of Esperance will provide clothing and equipment to all permanent employees of the Shire in the form of the following:

- One sun protective hat for employees working outside. To be replaced when deemed unserviceable.
- Four fluorescent shirts with a minimum of 50+ UPF rating (when new). Top half high visibility fluorescent yellow with bottom half dark blue in colour. To be replaced when deemed unserviceable. Shire identification will be included.
- Four pairs of trousers dark blue in colour. To be replaced when deemed unserviceable. Staff may elect to be provided with long shorts instead of trousers, but the total number of trousers/long shorts per staff member per year will not exceed four pairs.
- One water and wind resistant jacket with top half high visibility fluorescent yellow and the bottom dark blue.
- Jumper – top half fluorescent yellow, bottom half dark blue in colour. To be replaced when deemed unserviceable. Shire identification will be included.
- Casual employees will receive a Shire of Esperance Hi-Viz vest, dark safety glasses, hat and sun screen.

1. Replacement Items

Items will be replaced only if the unserviceable items are returned to the Purchasing Officer.

2. Responsibility

The employee will be responsible to notify the Purchasing Officer of any lost, damaged or stolen items

3. Maintenance

The employee will be responsible for the maintenance and safe keeping of all personal protective equipment at all times.

4. Property Ownership

At all times personal protective equipment remains the property of the Shire of Esperance.

5. Termination of Employment

Employees upon termination will be required, to return all items of personal protective equipment to the Purchasing Officer.

6. Exemption

As a Shire employee there will be no exemptions to the wearing of personal protective clothing and equipment as well as other safety equipment.

7. Grievance Procedure

Any employee, for which this policy applies, who fails to wear any of the personal protective equipment shall be stood down without pay until such time that they are prepared to wear the personal protective equipment. The incident will be reported and the disciplinary procedures as stated in the WA Local Government Award or any other relevant Award will be applied.

8. Contractors

Contractors and their employees are required to meet the minimum PPE requirements as set out in the clause on clothing protection at their own cost. There will be no exemptions to this requirement. Contractors working for the Shire of Esperance will be given a copy of the Shire's UV Policy and be expected to comply with it.

..... Policy Ends