

Sample UV protection policy for outdoor leisure

Background

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with over 13,000 cases diagnosed annually and the National Cancer Registry Ireland (NCRI) has estimated that between 2015-2045 the incidence of skin cancer will almost double¹. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and artificial sources (i.e. sunbeds) is the main risk factor for the development of skin cancer².

In the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan (2019-2022) those that pursue outdoor leisure activities have been identified as a high-risk group as skin cancer risk increases with higher levels of outdoor sun exposure². Those that participate in outdoor activities can spend prolonged periods of time outdoors and are exposed to solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation which can lead to skin damage, sunburn and ultimately skin cancer.

Developing a SunSmart policy can help to provide a safe environment by protecting people from solar UV radiation and will help minimise the risk of skin cancer. A sample SunSmart policy for your use is provided below.

It is recommended that the organisation use a [SunSmart Implementation framework](#) to implement the policy. The framework will help to strategically implement the policy.

Rationale

Sun protection should be an important issue for all organisations involved in outdoor activities as part of the duty of care to participants. A SunSmart Policy should consider sun protection measures such as

- engineering controls (measures that reduce exposure to solar UV by a physical change to the environment)
- administrative controls (measures that reduce exposure to solar UV by a change in practice)
- personal protective equipment (includes sun protective clothing, hats, UV protection sunglasses and/or sunscreen)
- awareness raising and education

This sample SunSmart Policy is intended as a guide only. Organisations should use this sample policy as a model when developing their own SunSmart Policy and make amendments that suit their needs and practicalities.

Sample SunSmart Policy

Name of club / organisation

SunSmart policy

Aims

This policy aims to ensure all participants are protected from solar UV radiation to reduce their risk of skin cancer. The policy outlines how to provide an environment that supports sun protection behaviours, engaging organisation with the Healthy Ireland SunSmart Steps to reduce their skin cancer risk.

Healthy Ireland SunSmart Steps



Slip on clothing that covers your skin, long sleeves, collared t-shirts



Slop on sunscreen on exposed areas using factor 50+ for children



Slap on a wide-brimmed hat



Seek shade - especially if outdoors between 11 am and 3 pm



Slide on sunglasses to protect your eyes

Be SunSmart



Sun protection measures

The following solar UV protection measures will be reviewed and employed where appropriate. The SunSmart Implementation framework will be completed to this policy.

1. Engineering Controls

- Shade
 - An assessment of existing shade is conducted.
 - Access to shade is provided for participants to be able to rest, watch or participate.
- Surface reflection (changing the colour or texture of a surface can reduce the amount of solar UV rays that is reflected off it):
 - An assessment of surface reflection is conducted identifying surfaces that reflect solar UV.
 - Measures will be taken to reduce surface reflection.

2. Administrative Controls

- Plan activities when the solar UV is lower. This is typically before 11am and after 3pm from April to September in Ireland. Check the UV index on the Met Eireann website (<https://www.met.ie/uv-index>) or app.
- Move activities to shaded areas when possible.
- Rotate participants on outdoor tasks to reduce sun exposure.

3. Personal protective equipment

- Clothing
 - Sun-protective clothing is included as part of the uniform.
 - Tops/jerseys are made from UPF (UV protection factor) 50+ material and have long sleeves and a collar. Tops/jerseys are loose-fitting and lightweight.
 - Ensure that participants are provided with or encouraged to wear wide brimmed hats. Baseball caps do not provide adequate sun protection to the face, ears and neck and are not recommended.

- Encourage participants to wear wrap-around sunglasses with 100% UVA and UVB protection. Sunglasses should meet the EN 170/EN 172 standards to protect eyes from solar UV radiation.
- Sunscreen
 - Participants are provided with or encouraged to wear a broad spectrum (UVA/ UVB) sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30+ for adults and 50+ for kids, with high UVA protection, and water resistant. Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before going out in the sun and re-applied every two hours to more often if getting wet or sweating.
 - Sunscreen should be easily accessible and expiry dates checked regularly.
 - Ensure that participants are provided with or encouraged to wear SPF30+ lip balm on the lips.
 - No sunscreen offers 100% protection from solar UV; it should be used alongside other protective measures such as clothing and shade.

4. Awareness raising and education

- Send SunSmart awareness messages through communication channels e.g.: newsletter, social media channels, email lists, notice boards at briefing and announced at training sessions.
- Include SunSmart messages as part of health and safety programmes and any healthy club/activity.
- Encourage all officials, coaches, trainers and adult members of the club to act as positive role models for younger members in all aspects of sun safe behaviour, by following the Healthy Ireland SunSmart 5 Steps.
- Inform individuals about the organisation’s SunSmart Policy when they join

Name of club /
organisation

This SunSmart policy will be reviewed regularly.

This policy was last updated on

Date

Next policy review:

Date



References

1. National Cancer registry. Cancer incidence projections for Ireland 2020-2045. Cork: NCRI; 2019.
2. Skin Cancer Prevention Plan (2019-2022). Department of Health, 2019