

# Skin Cancer Prevention Framework – Outdoor leisure

## Introduction

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with over 13,000 cases diagnosed annually. The National Cancer Registry Ireland (NCRI) has estimated that between 2015-2045 the incidence of skin cancer will almost double<sup>1</sup>.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and artificial sources (i.e. sunbeds) is the main risk factor for the development of skin cancer. The International Agency for research on cancer (IARC) classifies UV radiation as a class 1 carcinogen to humans, meaning there is a high level of certainty that it causes cancer<sup>2</sup>.

The National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan (2019-2022)<sup>3</sup> identifies those that pursue outdoor leisure activities as a high-risk group for skin cancer. Those that participate in tourism and sports (including sports participants, officials, coaches and spectators) can spend prolonged periods of time outdoors. This results in exposure to solar UV radiation, which can lead to skin damage, sunburn and ultimately skin cancer.

## Framework Purpose

It is recommended that outdoor leisure organisations develop a Skin Cancer Prevention Framework to help to provide a safe solar UV protective environment. The framework outlines a process by which the organisation can review its environment and strategically address skin cancer prevention initiatives and activities. It shows a commitment to protecting those that participate in outdoor activities such as tourism and sport from skin cancer risk.

## Elements to consider when using the framework

### Protection Control Measures

When using the sun protection framework you should consider sun protective measures such as engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment.

### Engineering Controls

These measures reduce exposure to solar UV by a physical change to the environment such as:

- **Shade** can come naturally from trees and shrubs, or artificially from permanent or portable structures such as canopies (see examples of permanent and portable shade structures below).
  - Shade should be available while being active or being a spectator. If shade is not possible, portable shade options may be considered. Another option may be to relocate activities to take advantage of existing shade if possible.
  - Shade provides protection against solar UV exposure and can reduce direct UV. You cannot rely on shade alone. You may still receive substantial amount of exposure from indirect sources of UV such as reflection from nearby surfaces. Always combine shade with personal sun protection such as hats, clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses.
- **Surface reflection** solar UV radiation reflects off different surfaces even while playing/spectating sport in the shade. Changing the colour or texture of a surface can reduce the amount of solar UV rays that is reflected off it:
  - Soft and rough or natural surfaces e.g. grass and soil reflects less solar UV than hard and/or smooth surfaces.
  - Dark colours reflect less solar UV; therefore painting a surface darker will help.



### Administrative Controls

These measures reduce exposure to solar UV by a change in practice and the way activities are organised such as:

- Plan activities to take place when 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 and plan activities when the UV index is 3 or below if possible.
- Plan activities where possible around shade availability.
- Rotate people on outdoor tasks to reduce sun exposure.



## Personal Protective Equipment

This includes sun protective clothing such as:

- **Clothing** – Sun-protective clothing should be included as part of any uniform for officials and participants. Choose tops/jerseys made from UPF (UV protection factor) 50+ material and have long sleeves and a collar.
- **Hats** – Ensure that officials and 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.
- **Sunglasses** – Encourage officials and 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** – Ensure that officials and 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. Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before going out in the sun, re-apply every two hours and more often if getting wet or sweating.

Sunscreen should be easily accessible and expiry dates checked regularly.

Ensure that officials and 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.

- Involve participants in selecting protective clothing and hats, sunscreen etc. Trial different methods and gather feedback on what works.
- Use coaches/organisers as role models for sun protective behaviours.

## Raising Awareness and Education

This includes promoting SunSmart messages across communication channels, embedding education in to existing programmes or developing education modules, such as:

- Send SunSmart awareness messages through communication channels, e.g. newsletter, social media channels, email lists, notice boards and announced at training sessions.
- Incorporate SunSmart messages as part of already established education or health and safety programmes i.e. to training courses, membership inductions, participation guides.
- 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.

## Healthy Ireland SunSmart Steps



**S**lip on clothing that covers your skin, long sleeves, collared t-shirts



**S**lop on sunscreen on exposed areas using factor 50+ for children



**S**lap on a wide-brimmed hat



**S**eek shade - especially if outdoors between 11 am and 3 pm



**S**lide on sunglasses to protect your eyes

- Use a variety of training methodologies and tools – know your audience, how do they like to receive training and in what format?
- Use family events, competitions, SunSmart incentives, personal stories, famous people's stories and so on.



## Using the Framework

The framework steps are outlined below. Organisations can work through these steps to identify initiatives and activities to create a sun protective environment.

### 1. Form a small working group on skin cancer prevention

- a) Seek representation from across the organisation/group to investigate, plan, develop and guide implementation of your skin cancer prevention framework.
- b) Agree Terms of Reference. Good governance will keep this group focused and productive.
- c) Clarify and understand your legal obligation and duty of care to those that participate in activities outdoors including officials, coaches and spectators.

### 2. Detail all people who participate in outdoor activities for all or part of their day regularly

- a) Detail categories of people who participate in outdoor activities.
- b) Conduct a risk assessment on all people who participate in activities outdoors – who is outdoors, for how long and how often, at what times of the year are they outdoors, what protective measures are in place?

### 3. Research skin cancer prevention in your organisation/group

- a) What is current practice?
- b) What are the gaps?
- c) Conduct baseline research to record attitudes, beliefs and knowledge levels, current behaviours in skin cancer prevention, levels of sunburn etc.
- d) Review what other organisations/groups are undertaking in skin cancer prevention that might work in your organisation/group.
- e) Consult with those who participate in outdoor activities in your organisation – ask their opinion on what is needed, what current gaps are and possible solutions to address those gaps.

### **Develop a SunSmart or skin cancer prevention plan**

- a) What did your research tell you?
- b) What budget do you have?
- c) What will you work on this year?
- d) What is the most pressing need /What is the priority?
- e) What is the main skin cancer prevention initiative for this year?
- f) Create a work plan to implement the SunSmart initiative for this year, including when, who and specific actions to be completed.

### **Policy**

- a) Draft a SunSmart Policy in line with your work plan to help to promote and commit to a sun safe environment. A sample SunSmart policy for your use is provided below.
- b) This policy should detail aspects in the solar UV protection framework that the organisation/group/club is implementing.
- c) Staff should receive training on the policy.
- d) The policy should be reviewed annually in line with other policies and linked to other relevant policies.

### **Monitoring**

The work plan should be monitored for achievements/progress/challenges and future actions. Include the following:

- a) Ongoing feedback from officials and participants to monitor shifts and trends in attitudes, knowledge and behaviours from baseline measures.
- b) Include a measure to assess implementation of your work plan initiative(s)
- c) Record all work plan actions in detail including who, what and when. This will identify successes and challenges for reflective practice.
- d) Record all costs associated with your annual plan and ring fence budget accordingly for future actions.
- e) Ensure on-going awareness for organisation participants of the annual work plan, use all communication channels available to publicise widely.



## References

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

## Appendix

### 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 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



**S**lip on clothing that covers your skin, long sleeves, collared t-shirts



**S**lop on sunscreen on exposed areas using factor 50+ for children



**S**lap on a wide-brimmed hat



**S**eek shade - especially if outdoors between 11 am and 3 pm



**S**lide on sunglasses to protect your eyes

## Sun protection measures

### 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 should be used. Sunscreen should be applied at least 20 minutes before going out in the sun and re-apply every two hours and 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 initiatives.
- 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