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## **Sun Poisoning or Severe Sunburn Warning:**

### **To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

This LTB and information is being issued further to advice issued annually to assist Branches and Safety Reps in conveying important Sun Safety information to outdoor workers.

2018 is set to be the hottest year on record, according to a global forecast by the Met Office. The Met Office long-range prediction forecast suggests that by the end of 2018 we will have seen five record years in a row for temperatures with this month hitting 35C (95F).

### **Don't Underestimate The Dangers Of Sun Poisoning**

Everybody loves to make the most of it when the sun comes out, which is great as sunlight is good for the bones and for our overall health. However, overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun can cause inflammation of the skin, otherwise known as sunburn. Extended overexposure can lead to sun poisoning, which is a more severe form of sunburn.

Unfortunately, most people underestimate the potential danger of sun poisoning. If you've spent too much time in the sun and are feeling sun poisoning symptoms, don't just dismiss them. You need immediate care to alleviate these symptoms and prevent potential long term effects.

### **Why is Sun Poisoning Dangerous?**

Sunburn or sun poisoning early in life puts you at a higher risk for developing skin cancer later on. However, frequent overexposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun causes untold damage to the skin and eyes. It increases the risk of developing cataracts and macular degeneration, which is the leading cause of blindness and also causes the skin to dry out leading to premature wrinkling and scarring.

### **Recognizing Sun Poisoning Symptoms**

If you've stayed out in the sun too long, some of the immediate symptoms of sunburn that you will see are that you feel dehydrated and your skin is red, flushed and tender and even the slightest touch causes pain. A few days after the exposure, your skin may begin to blister or swell or peel or in severe cases, it may develop rashes or welts. Limited exposure to the sun may have milder symptoms that could range from skin redness to skin irritation or mild pain.

Prolonged overexposure to the sun could cause sun poisoning, which has more severe symptoms.

### **Severe sunburn or sun poisoning can cause symptoms such as the following:**

- Fever and chills
- Headache
- Dizziness or disorientation
- Dehydration
- Nausea
- Facial Swelling
- Rapid breathing and rapid pulse
- Pain and tingling
- Skin redness, severe blistering and soreness
- Shock with loss of consciousness
- Heat stroke (Heat stroke is a severe form of hyperthermia and is considered a medical emergency)

### **Risk Factors for Sun Poisoning**

The intensity of your sun poisoning symptoms depends upon several factors including:-

- Your skin type: Lighter coloured skin is more susceptible to sun burn.
- The time, duration and season of the exposure: UV rays are strongest at noon and immediately before and after noon (between 10 am and 3 pm) and especially so in summer and spring.
- Medications you may be taking: Some drugs are sun-sensitizing and have been proven to increase a person's susceptibility to sun poisoning.

### **Measures for Preventing Sun Poisoning**

The best way to prevent sun poisoning is to avoid spending too much time in the sun, especially in direct sunlight in the middle of a hot summer's day. When you do go out in the sun, wear protective clothing – a large brimmed hat, loose long-sleeved shirt and long trousers and wear protective sunscreen over all exposed parts of the skin. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated while spending time in the sun. While mild sunburn can be easily managed by drinking a lot of water and applying a dampened cloth over the affected areas followed by application of a soothing cream, if you have the symptoms of sun poisoning, it is best to seek medical care as soon as possible.

### **Skin Cancer – Facts, Prevention & Detection**

- Almost all skin cancers are caused by over-exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) from the sun and/or sunbeds.
- All skin types can be damaged by exposure to UVR. Damage is permanent, irreversible and increases with each exposure.
- Skin cancer is the UK's most common and fastest rising cancer.
- Malignant melanoma is one of the most common cancers in young adults (aged 15-34) in the UK.
- More people die from skin cancer in the UK than Australia.
- Over 80% of all Skin Cancers are caused by over-exposure to the Sun and/or Sunbeds making the majority of all skin cancers preventable with sun safety measures.

### **The UV Index**

The UV Index provides a daily forecast of the expected risk of overexposure to the sun. The index provides UK intensity levels on a scale of 0 to 10+, where 0 is minimal risk and 10+ means very high risk. The aim of the index is to warn people of increased risk and encourage them to change their behaviour in order to protect themselves against risks of skin cancer and skin damage. The UV Index does not exceed 8 in the UK (8 is rare; 7 may occur on exceptional days, mostly in the two weeks towards the end of June). Indices of 9 and 10 are common in the Mediterranean area. However even the moderate exposure category level requires people to take precautions.

The UV index can be checked on the TV Weather Forecasts, at the BBC or at the Met Office Website at:-

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/health/public/uvindex#?tab=map&map=MaxUVIndex&zoom=5&lon=-4.00&lat=55.71&fcTime=1464566400>

<b>UV index</b>	
<b>Index</b>	<b>Exposure &amp; Met Office Advice</b>
<a href="#">1-2</a>	<a href="#">Low</a> - Safe to be outside
<a href="#">3-5</a>	<a href="#">Moderate</a> - Wear a wide-brimmed Hat, Sunglasses and use Sunscreen - Cover up, Seek Shade - Drink Plenty of Water
<a href="#">6-7</a>	<a href="#">High</a> - Wear a wide-brimmed Hat, Sunglasses and use Sunscreen - Cover up, Seek Shade - Drink Plenty of Water
<a href="#">8-10</a>	<a href="#">Very high</a> - Wear a wide-brimmed Hat, Sunglasses and use Sunscreen - Cover up, Seek Shade - Drink Plenty of Water
<a href="#">11</a>	<a href="#">Extreme</a> - Wear a wide-brimmed Hat, Sunglasses and use Sunscreen - Cover up, Seek Shade - Drink Plenty of Water

### **CWU "Sun Smart & Skin Safe" Campaign Pocket Fact Cards and Posters**

These cards and posters have been produced for CWU Branches, for distribution to all our outdoor workers and workplaces as part of our Union's annual campaign to lift the awareness of our members to the now very serious growing risk of sun burn and skin cancer as well as heat stress, stroke and dehydration.

Branches and Regional Health and Safety Forums can purchase additional posters and pocket fact cards from CWU HQ:

A batch of 10 posters = £1.40; and 50 posters = £7.00

A batch of 10 pocket fact cards = 68p; and 50 pocket fact cards = £2.89

Contact details for orders: Debby Akerman Post and Repro Department at CWU HQ  
[dakerman@cwu.org](mailto:dakerman@cwu.org) T: 0208 971 7218

### **Attachments:**

Sun Smart Leaflet/Pocket Card  
 Sun Smart Poster

Yours sincerely



**Dave Joyce**  
**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**