

Stay safe: working in the sun

By safely disposing of your liquid waste, you are helping to protect the natural environment. But it's important to protect yourself and others too.

Working outside in the sun can cause serious health risks. It is important to take the right measures to protect the body from the harmful rays and excessive heat.

Protect yourself against sunburn

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight causes sunburn, premature aging, cataracts and skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the UK.

From March to October the sun is stronger and the risk is greater, however even on cloudy days, harmful rays can penetrate the skin causing sunburn and skin damage.

Who is at risk?

Anyone who works outdoors for long periods of time could be exposed to more sun than is healthy. You should take particular care if you have:

- Fair, freckled or light brown skin
- Blond, red or light brown hair
- Tendency to burn rather than tan
- Lots of moles or skin problems relating to a medical condition
- Infrequent exposure to intense sun
- Family history of skin cancer.

What can you do to protect yourself?

- Try and spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm
- Use a water-resistance sunscreen (at least a factor 30), and reapply regularly
- Cover up with suitable clothing and wear a hat
- Check your skin regularly for new moles, growths or lumps; or patches of skin that change in size, shape and colour; become itchy or bleed.

You must report these changes to your doctor as soon as possible. Remember, skin cancer is much easier to treat if it's found early enough.

Protect your eyes from the sun

Ultraviolet (UV) rays can be as harmful to the eyes as they are to the skin.

If you spend time in the sun without proper eye protection this can cause a temporary, but painful, burn to the surface of the eye as well as cataracts and age-related muscular degeneration.

It is important to protect your eyes from the sun while working and driving, as well as when relaxing outside of working hours.

What can you do to protect yourself?

- Be aware of sun glare from sand, metal, concrete, snow and water
- Never look directly at the sun, as this can cause permanent eye damage
- Always wear sunglasses with appropriate UV protection (CE Kite Mark)
- Ensure sunglasses are large enough to shield eyes, eyelids and surrounding eye areas.

Protect yourself from heat exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is caused when the body overheats due to exposure to hot temperature, humidity or intense physical activity.

If not treated early, heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke, which can damage the brain and other vital organs.

What can you do to protect yourself?

- Take regular breaks – somewhere cooler if possible
- Avoid working in hot areas and in full sun where possible
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid excessive caffeine
- Wear loose fitting clothing.

Symptoms to look out for:

- Headaches
- Dizziness and confusion
- Loss of appetite and feeling sick
- Excessive sweating and pale skin
- Cramps in the arms, legs and stomach
- Breathing or pulse rate increases
- Temperature of 38C or above
- Feeling very thirsty and fatigued.

If someone is suffering from heat exhaustion:

- Move them to a cool place immediately
- Get them to lie down and raise their feet slightly
- Give them plenty of water to drink (slowly to prevent nausea)
- Remove any tight or unnecessary clothing
- Cool their skin with a cold spray, sponge them with cool water or fan them.

It is important you stay with the person until they feel better. If their symptoms don't improve after 30 mins then this could be a sign of heatstroke.

