

EHS Guidance

The Fundamentals of Sun Protection

Sun safety is always in season. While late spring and early summer may have the greatest risk, skin and eyes need protection all year round. In fact, snow glare in winter can nearly double your dose of ultraviolet (UV) exposure.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States – one in five Americans is likely to develop skin cancer within their lifetime. The primary cause is UV radiation from sun exposure. Regardless of its source (e.g., the sun, tanning beds), UV radiation causes premature skin aging, wrinkles, cataracts and skin cancer. The good news is that most skin cancers can be cured if detected early enough, making monthly skin checks very important.

UV Index

The UV Index is a measure of the level of UV radiation, and the potential danger of sun exposure. The reported or forecasted index is the maximum daily UV level and generally occurs between 10:00am and 4:00pm. Moscow, Idaho experiences its highest average daily UV index (6) in July, coinciding with UV Safety Awareness month.



- 0 to 2: No Protection Needed
- 3 to 7: Protection Needed
- 8+: Very High to Extreme

Sunscreen

Sunscreen is your best defense against skin cancer. OSHA recommends a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15; those less than SPF15 do not protect against skin cancer and early skin aging according to the FDA. You also want to ensure that the label says broad-spectrum, which will block both UVA and UVB rays. Only broad-spectrum sunscreen has been shown to reduce the risk of skin cancer and early aging caused by the sun.

What you need to know about sunscreen:

- Apply sunscreen at least 20 minutes before exposure.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater.
- Use broad-spectrum sunscreen for protection against UVA and UVB.
- Reapply every 2 hours with normal activity.
- No sunscreen is waterproof – reapply frequently if swimming or exercising.
- Sunscreen loses its potency over time and expires – throw it away after one or two years.
- Insect repellents may interfere with sunscreen, and you may need to reapply more often.

Safety Recommendations

Everyone is likely to receive at least some exposure to UV rays every day, including cloudy days. While it is nearly impossible to completely avoid UV rays, there are things we can do to minimize the dangers of exposure. We encourage our Vandal Family to:

- Apply sunscreen, keeping the information above in mind.
- Create work schedules that minimize sun exposure – UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Limit exposure – the longer your exposure, the greater the risk of damage to skin and eyes.
- Take breaks in shaded areas - use tents, shelters, and cooling stations as work sites.
- Cover up with loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Wear a wide brim hat to protect your neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose and scalp.
- Wear UV-absorbent polarized sunglasses.

For More Information

- [Facts about Sunscreen | FDA](#)
- [Protecting Yourself in the Sun \(osha.gov\)](#)
- [NIOSH Fast Facts: Protecting Yourself from Sun Exposure | NIOSH | CDC](#)
- <https://www.epa.gov/sunsafety>