

Work environment – Rural safety

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Skin cancer >

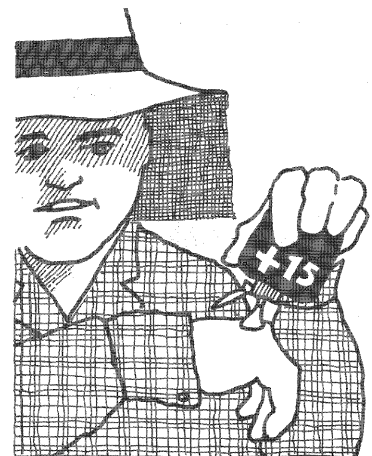
This bulletin outlines some simple safety guidelines for those working in the rural industry and is one of a series on Rural Industry safety.

Two out of every three Australians are likely to develop skin cancer.

As a rural worker you spend most of your time during the day outside. You are therefore most at risk.

Remember

- You do not actually have to get sunburnt to damage your skin and risk skin cancer.
- Skin cancers are mostly related to over-exposure to the sun **taking place over a period of time.** Most skin cancer can be prevented by protecting the skin from the sun

**Types of skin cancer**

There are various types of skin cancer:

- **Basal Cell Carcinoma** - starts as a small lump which flattens out as it grows. One of the two most common growths. It can be easily treated and cured.
- **Squamous Cell Carcinoma** - is the other most common growth, however, it is more likely to spread to other parts of the body.
- **Malignant Melanoma** - the most dangerous type of skin cancer. Often starts as a dark mole. This type is responsible for over 1200 deaths in Australia each year.

Sunspot (Solar Keratosis) - a small scaly patch of skin occurring on the arms, face, nose and ears. They are not strictly a form of cancer but indicate excessive exposure to solar UV radiation.

Protection

All persons on the farm including children should be encouraged to protect themselves against the sun.

- Highest risk time in the sun is between 10.00am and 3.00pm.
- Wear protective clothing, ie a shady hat, collared shirt in a dark, close weave fabric with long sleeves and trousers.

putting safety first >



- Use a sunscreen with very high sun protection factor at least SPF 15+ before you go out into the sun.
- Noses, lips, ears, bald heads, necks and backs of hands need extra protection.
- Reapply sunscreen regularly, particularly if you are perspiring, at least every 2 hours.
- Over-exposing yourself to the sun's ultraviolet rays increases the risk of skin cancers, now and in the future.
- Use a tractor with shade protection fitted.

The easiest way of dealing with skin cancer is to avoid getting it.

Check for early signs

Checks should be made for early signs of cancer. These include:

- any unusual skin condition that doesn't heal;
- any sore, ulcer or scaly patch on the skin;
- a white patch on the lips that doesn't heal;
- any mole that seems to grow quickly;
- any mole that changes shape, colour or size;
- any mole that bleeds or itches.

If any of these early warning signs is noticed a doctor should be consulted.

SKIN cancers are mostly related to over-exposure to the sun over a period of time. Reduce the risk - Cover up!

Do you:

- reduce the amount of exposure during peak times?
- wear a hat, sunscreen and long sleeve collared shirt and trousers?
- check for early signs of skin cancer?

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