

Summer Safety



Environmental hazards such as seasonal conditions can change our working environments – bringing new risks and changing existing risks.

Awareness of hazards:

New Zealand's sun has dangerously high UV levels. Higher temperatures cause fatigue and impair decision making and performance. Surfaces and materials can become hot. Plant and equipment may run at higher operating temperatures.

Understanding risks:

Direct sun exposure causes superficial burns (injury) and contributes to skin cancer over time (illness). Direct contact with hot surfaces also causes burns.

Dehydration and fatigue increases safety risks for workers working at height, in confined spaces, and on road sites and excavations. Using PPE can also restrict movement and increase heat and fatigue risks.

Plant, equipment, and materials may fail or perform differently at higher temperatures.

Safe behaviours include reducing diuretics (e.g. coffee and energy drinks) that dehydrate us, maintaining regular water intake, and taking regular breaks.

Unsafe behaviour includes exposing skin and eyes to UV risks and being physically or mentally unfit for work.

Eliminate or minimise risks (examples):

Risk controls focus on either the hazard or the behaviour of workers and others.

- **Eliminate the hazard.** Work at night.
- **Substitute the hazard.** (NA)
- **Isolate the hazard.** Take regular breaks in the shade. Isolate hot surfaces. Schedule work outside of midday heat.
- **Use engineered modifications.** Ventilation, air-conditioning, and fans.

Focusing on human behaviours include:

- **Administration** of safe systems of work. Monitor operating temperatures for plant and equipment. Health monitoring.
- **Personal protection equipment (PPE).** Apply (and reapply) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen. Cover up with cool and well-ventilated clothing, headwear, and close-fitting eyewear (ref. AS/NZ 1337). Support other team members to apply sunscreen, drink water, and take regular breaks.