

news & notes

WHAT ARE UV RAYS?

And why are they hazardous? Ultraviolet light is a form of radiation that can penetrate and change skin cells. There are two types of UV rays to worry about: **UVA and UVB**.

UVA, the most abundant type, can penetrate beyond the top layer of skin and increase the risk of skin cancer and eye problems, such as cataracts and macular degeneration. UVB rays are less plentiful because more are absorbed by the ozone layer, and they penetrate less deeply into the skin. But they can still be damaging.

There's a third type of UV ray called **UVC**. It's the most hazardous, but the ozone layer absorbs it before it gets to Earth.

When do you need to protect against UV exposure? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, protection from UV rays is important all year-round, not just during the summer.

However, since most people spend more time outside in the sun during the summer, and since the sun's rays are stronger at this time of year, the risks increase. Generally the greatest danger is between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on clear days.

But harmful UV rays can be a threat on cloudy and hazy days, too. And the risk also increases any time you are somewhere like the beach or pool, where UV rays reflect off water, sand, and concrete. For most people, the risk of overexposure occurs off the job.

But if your job duties involve outdoor work, you need to take precautions even during work hours. See "**Clear Skin and Vision**" for what safety measures to follow.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Clear Skin and Vision

National UV Safety Month

Consider these statistics:

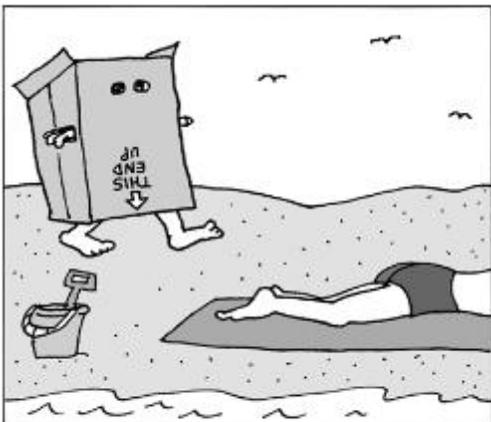
- Every year, more than 50,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer.
- More than 1 million people in the United States are diagnosed with less serious forms of skin cancer each year.

Ultraviolet (UV) rays (See "**What are UV Rays?**") can permanently harm both skin and eyes. There's nothing wrong with enjoying a warm, sunny day, but you need to know that whether you are working or playing, too much exposure to sunlight can have serious health effects.

You probably know that too much sun can cause skin cancer and skin aging. But you may not realize that sunlight also can cause eye damage—it has been linked to cataracts and other eye ailments. It's also possible for eyes to become "sunburned"—not necessarily a serious condition in itself, but one that could contribute to eye problems later on in life.

All of these facts make it essential for you to take proper precautions when you are out in the sun:

- **Check the UV index** online, on the TV weather forecast, or in the newspaper, and be especially careful when the index is high.
- **Wear a brimmed hat and sunglasses** that filter out UV rays.
- **Cover up with a long-sleeved shirt and long pants** made of a tightly woven fabric for the best skin protection if you burn easily or are outside for long hours.
- **Always use a broad-spectrum sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher** to protect against both UVA and UVB rays. And reapply according to directions on the label.
- **Apply lip block** as well, because the lips are also sensitive to UV light and lip cancer is a growing health concern.
- **Avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.**, when UV rays are strongest.
- **Recognize that even on a cloudy day, UV rays still get through** and present skin and eye hazards.
- **Protect against glare** from sunlight reflecting off water—wraparound sunglasses provide the best protection.



**The refrigerator box:
100% UV protection.**

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FORKLIFT BATTERY SAFETY

Most safety talk about forklifts centers around tipovers—but forklift batteries present serious hazards, too. Forklift drivers and others who work around forklifts and on forklift maintenance need to know the hazards and how to protect themselves with proper precautions.

Here is a brief rundown of the hazards, safety equipment, and safety procedures involved when working with forklift batteries.

Battery hazards include:

- Battery acid (electrolyte)
- Flammable gas (hydrogen)
- Electrical shock
- Heavy weight

Safety equipment available in the battery charging area includes:

- Ventilation
- Spill kit
- Fire extinguishers
- Emergency shower and eyewash station
- Protection for the charging apparatus (barriers, guardrails, etc.)

To prepare a lift truck for battery charging:

- Position the truck properly.
- Apply the parking brake.
- Turn off lights and accessories.
- Turn off the ignition.
- Disconnect the battery from the truck.

When charging a battery:

- The charger should be turned off before connecting it to the battery.
- Vent caps should be on during charging.
- The battery cover should be open during charging.



Allergy Meds at Work

Know the side effects

While there are many effective medicines to alleviate allergy symptoms, know their possible side effects and how they could affect your work performance. For example, many common **antihistamines**, such as Claritin, Benadryl, Tavist, Allegra, and Zyrtec, may cause drowsiness. Don't take these medicines before driving or operating heavy machinery.

In addition, some **eye drops**, such as Visine-A and Opcon-A, may cause watery eyes, mild stinging or burning, and headaches. These side effects may affect your vision and be dangerous on the job.

Some **decongestants**, such as Sudafed or Claritin D, may cause lightheadedness, insomnia, and nervousness, which can adversely affect your work.

Prescription medicines may have other side effects. If you need to take allergy medications while at work, follow these steps:

1. **Read the label** for possible side effects.
2. **Consult with your doctor or pharmacist to find a medicine that treats symptoms without side effects** that affect your work.
3. **Consult with your doctor to determine the best time to take medicine**, e.g. before bed, so that it treats your symptoms without affecting your work.
4. **Inform your supervisor about your medication.** You may be able to adjust your schedule to accommodate allergy medication.

Respirator Refresher

When and which to use

OSHA regulations require you to use a respirator when there is a serious threat to your health, including areas with airborne contaminants, such as chemical vapors, gases, or dust; too little oxygen; or other serious health hazards. Different types of respirators are designed to protect against different health hazards.

- Air-purifying respirators pass air through a filter, cartridge, or canister that removes specific contaminants.
- Atmosphere-supplying respirators—either self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) or supplied-air respirators (SAR)—provide you with breathing air from an independent source.

Not all workers can wear respirators safely—you must have a medical evaluation before you can be fit-tested. Fit tests must use the same respirator make, model, style, and size that will be used on the job.

Check out the appropriate respirators for the job hazard—select one and try it for at least 5 minutes to see if it is comfortable for you.

- Check for positioning on the face and room for eye protection.
- Check for ability to talk while wearing the respirator.
- Check to be sure there is a good fit without slippage even if you move about as you would on the job.