

Research report summary: Outdoor workers exposure to UV radiation and skin cancer

Outdoor workers



In Ireland, almost **13,000 cases of skin cancer are diagnosed annually** (NCRI, 2021). CSO figures (2018) suggests almost one in four (23%) of skin cancer deaths in Ireland are from the construction, outdoor and farming industry.

Research has shown **outdoor workers at the highest risk of UV exposure** and therefore skin cancer are:

- farmers
- gardeners
- construction workers
- postal workers
- park workers
- mountain guides
- landscapers
- people who work at sea

Skin cancer risk factors include:



- gender
- education
- age
- skin type
- time spent outdoors
- ethnic background
- social attitudes and behaviours

How long outdoors?

4hrs

Those who spend **4 or more hours outdoors daily** have a higher risk of skin cancer.

Who is at risk?



- **Males tend to be exposed to higher levels of UV radiation** than women because they are more likely to have outdoor work positions.
- **Those with fairer skin are at higher risk** of skin damage and skin cancer.
- **Sun-safety habits** are weak among people with darker skin as they may underestimate their risk.
- **Outdoor workers with low education and low-income earnings** may have poorer skin cancer knowledge and sun safety habits.

Role of employers



- It is recommended that organisations **strategically address skin cancer prevention** through training and education, protection control measures, monitoring and policy.

Conclusion



Outdoor workers are at increased risk of UV exposure and therefore skin cancer. There are other risk factors that can also play a part and that is why employers need to commit to protecting workers and adhere to skin cancer prevention best practice in the workplace.

Full research report available at www.hse.ie/sunsmart