



SUN PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Adopted or Amended	By Whom	Date
Adopted	Board of Directors	28 March 2006
Amended	Board of Directors	28 October 2009
Reviewed	Board of Directors	27 October 2010
Reviewed	Board of Directors	26 October 2011
Reviewed	Board of Directors	4 December 2012
Amended	Board of Directors	5 March 2013
Reviewed	Board of Directors	31 March 2015
Reviewed	Board of Directors	31 January 2017
Reviewed	Board of Directors	29 January 2019
Reviewed	Board of Directors	1 st February 2022



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BACKGROUND

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Every year, over 1500 Australians die of this disease. The main cause of skin cancer is ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun. Exposure to UVR, both in and out of the water, has been identified as the major cause of skin cancer. Any person who is exposed to UVR is at risk of skin cancer.

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Swimming New South Wales Ltd has a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of participants, volunteers, and staff, at its swimming events. In doing so, risks that may affect participants must be identified, assessed and eliminated or, if this is not possible, controlled.

OPERATION

These guidelines should apply at all Swimming New South Wales events where participants, volunteers or staff are, or are likely to be, exposed to UVR.

REVIEW

These guidelines will be reviewed on a regular basis and / or upon amendments to applicable legislation.

CLOTHING

Even when working in shade, people still need suitable clothing and sunscreen to protect them from UVR scattered in the atmosphere or reflected off water, sand, concrete, grass or any pool deck surface. Both the design and the type of fabric used in the garment are important in maximising the sun protection it offers.

Volunteers, staff and swimmers, when not competing, should wear loose fitting clothing that cover as much skin as possible - shirts with long or elbow length sleeves and collars (worn turned up), and trousers or skirts, or shorts which are at least knee-length.

The clothing should be made of a close woven fabric. Purpose-made protective clothing will have an Ultraviolet Protective Factor (UPF) of 40, 45, 50 or 50+. The higher the UPF, the better.

UPF Range	% UVR absorbed	%UVR transmitted	%UVR transmitted Protection category described in Australian Standard
15 to 24	93.3 to 95.8	6.7 to 4.2	Good
25 to 39	95.9 to 97.4	4.1 to 2.6	Very good protection
40 to 50+	97.5>	<2.5	Excellent protection

Tip - hold the fabric up to the light. If it doesn't let much light through it's good for protection.

SHADE

Where possible, hold training sessions and competition at venues that provide adequate shade. If adequate shade is not available, temporary and portable shade structures should be provided. There are a number of options:-

- **Natural or existing shade** – use the shade of existing buildings and other structures at the venue – natural features such as trees and shrubs may also provide limited cover
- **Textile or coated fabrics** – put up fabrics (such as canvas, sailcloth and awning or umbrella fabric) or use ready-made canopies – these fabrics are generally light woven and have an all weather coating – heavy textile covers block out most light, giving around 99%UV protection
- **Synthetic Shade cloths** – these allow some sunlight through. Check protection levels for different colours as levels vary from light to dark colours – shade cloths giving less than 94% cover factor may allow enough UV radiation through to cause skin damage – ask to see the UV radiation transmission figures before buying any shade materials, look for 95%+ protection. For more details, see Australian Standard AS4174-1994 Synthetic shade cloth.
Personal protective equipment (PPE) will also need to be used as UV radiation may pass through the shade material or reflect off the ground and other surfaces.

HATS AND HEADGEAR

Wearing a hat is one of the best ways to reduce direct exposure to the face, neck and ears.

Different styles of hats offer different levels of UVR protection.

A suitable hat should;

- Shade the face, neck and ears, and be made of tightly woven material.
- Be broad-brimmed (8-10cm). Hats and caps with neck flaps (legionnaire's caps) offer good protection.
- Bucket hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The brim should be at least 6cm.

Volunteers and staff should wear a suitable hat when exposed to UVR. Baseball caps are not suitable as they do not cover the face, ears and back of the neck in an adequate fashion.

SUNGLASSES

Good sunglasses can filter out up to 99% of UVR. Sunglasses with an eye protection factor of EPF9 or EPF10 or that comply with Australian Standard AS1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) offer the most effective protection. It is recommended that volunteers and staff wear sunglasses when exposed to UVR. Suitable sunglasses should stop UVR coming in at the sides as well as from directly in front. Wrap-around styles that fit close to the face work well.

SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen should be used in conjunction with other types of skin protection such as clothing, hats and sunglasses. Skin which isn't covered by clothing needs to be protected by sunscreen. An effective sunscreen, properly and regularly applied, can filter out up to 96% of damaging UVR from reaching your skin by creating a barrier. It is recommended that volunteers and staff apply broad spectrum of SPF30+ or SPF50+ sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors. Competitors should use similar, but water resistant sunscreens. Sunscreen should be reapplied every 2 hours or after getting wet or perspiring, as it will wash off.

EVENT TIMES

UVR levels are at their peak when the sun is highest in the sky, between 10 AM and 2 PM (or 11 AM and 3 PM Daylight Saving Time) and during the summer months. Swimming New South Wales will attempt to schedule events to avoid peak UVR times.

Wherever possible events will:

- Start earlier or later in the day
- Rotate indoor and outdoor workers so that outside work is shared during peak UVR times.

INCREASE AWARENESS OF SUN SAFETY

Sun protection information should be regularly promoted to officials, participants and spectators through briefing sessions, newsletters, notice boards, announcements at swimming events and when joining the club.

ROLE MODELLING

All officials, coaches, trainers, adult members and parents associated with swimming should be encouraged to act as positive role models for younger members in all aspects of Sun Smart behaviour and including using a combination of sun protection measures.