

Guide for Managers

Lifeguards are outdoor workers. Outdoor workers are at an increased risk for skin cancer and heat illnesses.

Sun exposure is an occupational exposure and should be treated like any other workplace hazard.

Employers and managers have an important role to control the exposure and protect lifeguards. If you're interested but you're not sure where to start or what to do, read on!

Adapted from Sun Safety at Work Canada, the following steps can be followed to create a sun smart work environment for the lifeguards at your pool.



CORE

Review your pool's OHS Policies and Incorporate Sun Safety Policy Measures

A sun safety policy is an occupational health and safety (OHS) policy statement about a workplace's commitment to being sun safe. It is the critical first step to developing a sun safety program.

PLAN

Complete a Baseline Assessment

If you haven't already, consider completing a Baseline Assessment. A comprehensive assessment of your current sun safety practices will help to identify areas where you're doing well and areas where you could take action.

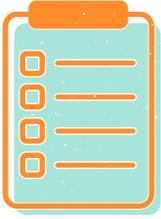
Develop an Action Plan

An Action Plan should help you document, prioritize, and assign responsibility for actions.

DO

Control Exposure using a Hierarchy of Controls

With occupational hazards, a hierarchy of controls means that the most effective actions are those closest to the source. We cannot eliminate the exposure to the sun, but we can try to control the exposure rather than putting the full responsibility on the workers to protect themselves. In many cases, it is necessary to use a combination of control measures in order to effectively manage the risk.



Start where you can, monitor your success, and build your program over time. Here are some ideas to get you started on the hierarchy of controls:

Engineering Controls:

Engineering controls separate the worker from the hazard by designing safety features into the work area or equipment. Consider the work environment at the pool:

- **Shade:** Is there sufficient shade available? Where possible, lifeguards should work in shade or take breaks in shade. Shade can either be human-made (permanent or temporary (umbrella) shade structures) or natural (shade from trees). If you are interested in conducting an official shade audit, contact Sun Smart Saskatchewan for support.
- **Cooling systems:** Are break areas air conditioned?

Administrative Controls:

Administrative controls improve worker's ability to safely interact with the hazard. Consider your work practices and procedures, including rules for employees:

- **Weather Monitoring:** Assign responsibility for checking the UV Index, temperature, and humidex daily.
- **Rotation:** Plan a work rotation that allows for adequate work-rest cycles and time to guard in the shade, if possible.
- **Scheduling:** Plan for physically demanding tasks to be completed early in the morning or in the evening when the temperature and UV index are lower.
- **First Aid and Incident Reporting:** All incidents of sunburn, photokeratitis, and heat stress should be reported. Document and track incidents to monitor the success of your sun safety program or build support for greater intervention.
- **Personal Protection:** Define how the personal protection equipment is to be used.
- **Procurement:** If possible, order and supply sun safety gear, including sunglasses, sunscreen, long-sleeved lifeguard uniforms, and hats.
- **Training and Education:** Include sun exposure in regular safety talks or meetings. Incorporate sun safety training in the lifeguard orientation process. Invite Sun Smart Saskatchewan to conduct the training, or utilize sun smart resources, including the Be a Sun Smart Lifeguard video and discussion guide.
- **Awareness:** Post sun safety information and reminders for lifeguards in break rooms.

Personal Protection:

Control measures for personal protection include anything worn or used by an individual worker to protect themselves. Personal protection is the last line of defense.

Personal protection for sun exposure should provide coverage to as much of the worker's body as possible, yet still allow the worker to stay cool during hot weather. Sun smart personal protection measures include:

- **Clothing:** Long-sleeved lifeguard uniforms could be available as an option. Clothing is the most effective form of personal protection. Long-sleeved shirts with collars are best. Choose breathable fabrics (for thermal comfort) with a high ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) if possible.
- **Sunglasses:** Polarized lenses will help reduce glare from the pool. Lenses should be UV protective, with the label UV 400 or 100% UV protection. Close-fitting wrap around styles are best.
- **Sunscreen:** Sunscreen should be applied on all skin not covered by clothing. Most people do not apply enough. Look for a formula that is broad spectrum, water resistant, and at least SPF 30.
- **Hats:** Choose wide-brimmed hats for the best protection for the head, face, ears, and neck.

For a full overview of how to develop a sun safety program at your pool, refer to [sunsmarts.ca/build-your-own-sun-safety-program](https://www.sunsmarts.ca/build-your-own-sun-safety-program)

