

TOOLBOX TALK #50

SUN PROTECTION IN THE WINTER

Sun protection may not be on top of the list for outdoor workers during the colder months, but ignoring skin protection in the wintertime is a mistake. To help protect skin against sun exposure and skin cancer, the Skin Cancer Foundation recommends following these steps:

Face: When applying sunscreen, use a product with an SPF of at least 15. However, when working outside for an extended period of time, use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Workers should apply a nickel-sized amount of sunscreen to their face 30 minutes before heading outside, and then reapply after two hours outdoors or profuse sweating. And don't neglect your nose. "More than 30% of all facial basal cell carcinomas (the most common skin cancers) occur on the nose, making it the most important site for skin cancers of the head and neck," the foundation points out, so add an extra dab there.



Head and Neck: The head and neck are particularly vulnerable to melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. "According to research from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, patients with melanomas of the head and neck – including the scalp - were almost twice as likely to die from the disease as patients with melanomas on other areas, including the trunk, facial skin and ears," the foundation states. To help protect the head and neck, SCF advises workers to wear wide-brimmed hats that have at least a 3-inch brim. Opaque material with dense, tightly woven fabrics is best. Apply sunscreen anywhere your head and scalp are exposed to the sun, and don't forget the part in your hair and any bald or thinning spots.

Lips: When applying sunscreen, make sure to include your lips. Either add sunscreen to your lips or use a lip balm that has SPF protection.

Eyes: Although hats can help provide eye protection, it's best to wear UV-blocking eyewear when working outside.