Parks & Recreation

Sun Protection Policy Guidelines

Introduction

Skin cancer is considered epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over one million Americans are expected to get skin cancer this year. That's more people than the collective total of all who will get cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, and colon. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight causes 80 to 90 percent of all skin cancer cases. Risk for skin cancer can be greatly reduced when certain precautions are practiced.

It is prudent for park and recreation directors to establish a sun safety policy to protect staff and patrons from excessive sunlight, and to avoid potential liability and litigation stemming from subsequent blistering sunburns, dehydration, and skin cancer. This document is designed to assist administrators as they create sun protection guidelines for their unique venue and circumstances.

Some statements presented in this sample policy may prove impractical and may need to be modified or totally omitted from the procedures administrators develop. The goal is to adopt as many of the sun safety principles and strategies as possible, according to their feasibility. The policy created should cover both recreation activities as well as employee outdoor work duties.

Following are the basic tactics for preventing skin cancer. Secondly, the sun safety tips are translated into guidelines for outdoor acitivites.

Basic Personal Strategies for Preventing Skin Cancer

1. Reduce exposure to sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (10 a.m. to 3p.m. during the winter), as feasible.
2. Wear full-body coverage clothing when outside in sunlight including four-inch full-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and full-length pants (weather permitting).
3. Use sunglasses that state they protect from 100 percent of UVA and UVB. A UV-protective coating can be added to prescription glasses.
4. Apply full-spectrum (UVA & UVB) sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater) to exposed skin, 30 minutes before going outside in the sun.
5. Use lip balm that has a SPF rating of at least 15.
6. Seek shade when outside in the sun.

Suggested Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation or Work

1. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will be scheduled before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m., from March through October. The availability of shade will be considered when planning such activities during these time frames.
2. For all outdoor activities occurring on sunny (non-rainy) days – especially between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – patrons and staff will be encouraged to :

   A. Play or work in shaded areas, when practical

   B. Wear full-body coverage clothing that includes:

   (1) Four-inch or more full-brimmed hats that, when worn, create a shadow that completely covers the head, face nose, ears, and neck. (Flappy-jacks, patterned somewhat like a baseball hat with neck flaps, may prove a practical solution.)

   (2) Long-sleeved shirts and full-length pants made of tightly woven fabric that is lightweight.

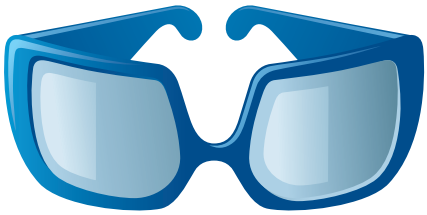
   This strategy applies when temperatures are reasonable.

   C. Wear sunglasses that protect from 100 percent of UVA & UVB (full-spectrum).

   D. Thirty minutes before going outside, apply sunscreen to exposed skin.

   E. Use lip balm that has a SPF rating of at least 15.

3. A program committee or other appointed group, following an established timetable, will develop and implement a plan to place trees and/or construct shelters that provide shade for protecting people that engage in outdoor activities occurring at (site name). (Note: In most cases, the preferred location for providing shade will be along or in close proximity to the borders of recognized recreation areas or sports fields. This will allow patrons and staff to easily access shade when they are not actively participating in the activities.)
4. Parents or guardians will be encouraged verbally and through written communications to provide the above described (choose…) hat, full-length clothing, dark glasses, lip balm, and sunscreen.
5. Sun protection training and materials will be provided to staff and patrons encouraging them to practice sun safety while participating in P & R activities/job duties or engaging in any outdoor pastimes.
6. While on duty, staff are encouraged to practice sun safety principles/strategies to protect themselves and serve as good role models for patrons, especially children.
7. These guidelines will be communicated and reinforced to staff and patrons through verbal reminders, posters, signs, pamphlets, notices, newsletters, and meetings, etc., and above all, on-site PRACTICE.



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