

Guidance on working outdoors in hot summer conditions

A sunny day makes most of us feel good, but too much sunlight can be harmful on the skin and sun and heat can cause dehydration, heat stress and even death.

Skin damage, skin cancer and your eyes

Too much sunlight is harmful to your skin. It can cause skin damage including sunburn, blistering and skin ageing and in the long term can lead to an increased risk of skin cancer. Skin cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in the UK with over 50,000 new cases every year.

Ground staff that work mainly outdoors for long periods could get more sun on their skin than is healthy for them, increasing the risk of skin cancer.

If work keeps you outdoors for a long time your skin could be exposed to more sun than is healthy for you. You should take particular care if you have:

- fair or freckled skin that doesn't tan, or goes red or burns before it tans
- red or fair hair and light coloured eyes
- a large number of moles.

A tan is a sign that the skin has been damaged. The damage is caused by ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight. UV can also damage your eyes.

Heat Exhaustion and Heatstroke

Working, particularly physical work, in hot and/or sunny conditions can cause heat exhaustion which can lead to heat stroke which needs to be treated as an emergency.

The signs of heat exhaustion include a headache, dizziness and confusion, loss of appetite and feeling sick, excessive sweating and pale clammy skin, cramps in arms legs and stomach, fast breathing or pulse, a high temperature of 38°C or above and being very thirsty. The signs of heat stroke are more serious. Know the signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke, and what to do to help someone with heat exhaustion, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/>

What can you do to protect yourself and stay safe in the sun and heat?

- Reschedule work to cooler parts of the day where possible.
- Reduce the amount of time you spend in the sun, stay in the shade.
- Introduce shade to working areas where possible and it is safe to do so.
- Work in stages with more breaks and rehydrate and cool in those breaks.
- Rotate tasks across the team.
- Whenever possible during breaks and especially at lunch time, stay out of the sun and remove PPE to allow cooling (replace before returning to work).

- Drink plenty of water. Avoid dehydration by drinking a minimum of 2 litres of water throughout the day. Water is vital to your body's performance and overall health. Your risk of accident, including when operating machinery, can increase significantly if you are dehydrated.
- Wear loose clothing that allows for air circulation.
- Dampen down clothing to provide extra cooling, especially in breezy conditions.

- Keep your top on. Cover up, especially while you are working around midday, this will stop most of the UV. Don't be tempted to leave it off, even if your skin tans easily and does not burn.
- Long sleeves and a collar can add to sun protection and some fabrics offer more UV protection than others.
- Wear a hat with a brim or a flap that covers the ears and the back of the neck.
- Use a high factor sunscreen. Hats and other clothing are the best forms of protection, but sunscreen creams and lotions can add useful protection for parts of your body that are not easy to shade from the sun. The NHS recommends a sun protection factor (SPF) rating of 30 or more and at least 4 star UVA protection. Read the supplier's instructions on how it should be applied and how frequently it should be reapplied. Don't forget the backs of your hands.
- Where it is safe to do so, wear tinted sunglasses with UV protection. If you are required to wear safety glasses you should wear tinted, UV protecting safety sunglasses rated to match the specification of your normal safety glasses, and only where the tint does not impact on the safety of the task.

[See more on hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)

Acting quickly on skin cancer

- Check your skin. The first warning sign is often a small scabby spot which does not clear after a few weeks. Look for changed or newly formed moles or any skin discolouration. It is normal for a few new moles to appear until you are about 18 years old. As an adult you should pay particular attention to any growths which appear on the face, especially around the nose and eyes, or in the backs of hands; you should show your doctor any moles which change in size, colour, shape or start to bleed.

If you notice any of these signs seek medical advice, most of these signs will be harmless, but medical checks may be needed to be sure.

See: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/melanoma-skin-cancer/> for more information

Using Water for Irrigation – General Advice

Irrigation in dry weather is needed to prevent irrecoverable damage to the grass plant and to maintain playing pitch safety. Water is a valuable resource and sports clubs should plan for the future. Looking at water sources other than mains such as boreholes, how to use water efficiently and harvest water whenever possible. As a part of planning any future development or improvement water harvesting should be involved of the project. Water can be collected of roof area and from outfield drainage system.

When watering grass sports pitches/surfaces for general turf health, the water needs to get into the soil profile to prevent grass root searching for water on the surface.

During drought periods is it essential water is used in an efficient and responsible way to maximise the benefit of irrigation and to minimise usage and protect water resources.

The following points are a guide to water usage:

- Avoid applying water during the hottest part of the day (late evening is the best time because temperatures are lower and water can soak into the profile overnight, the second best time is early morning when temperatures are still low).
- Avoid applying water in windy conditions.
- Water the target area evenly. Make sure that you are not watering excessively – keep an eye on sprinklers and avoid wasteful run-off.
- Water the target area evenly.
- Maintain application equipment and hoses to avoid leaks and provide optimum application.
- Use pitch covers to retain moisture where possible.
- Reduce surface organic matter to improve infiltration.
- When pitch planning allows carry out surface aeration to improve infiltration.
- Remove weeds and other moisture competitors.
- Raise cut height and reduce mowing where possible as this can help to reduce drought stress.

Building drought resilience

Water is a valuable resource and sports clubs can help to reduce consumption, particularly from expensive mains drinking water. Clubs can plan for the future when mains drinking water supplies are likely to be under greater demand. There are a number of strategies including:

- Improving irrigation efficiency – whether that is more efficient equipment, automated sprinklers so that you can apply water over night or fixing leaky hoses, improving efficiency saves water.
- Look into whether a borehole is a cost effective solution for your site. You will need to consider the geology under your ground and whether you need or can get an abstraction licence (abstractions less than 20 m³/day do not currently need an abstraction licence). Speak to a specialist bore hole installer for more advice.

- Some sites may be suitable for harvesting and storing water – whether that is rainfall from roofs or drainage water. Always seeks specialist advice because managing harvested water quality is important when it is used for irrigation.

The ECB offer guidance and funding for suitable drought resilience and water saving projects – speak to your County Cricket Board.

Water Usage Guidance for Cricket Square/Pitches in hot, dry weather

Cricket is a summer sport and irrigation is essential for the preparation of safe cricket pitches. Maintaining grass coverage on the square with dense, deep root growth and getting water through the square soil profile is critical towards the production of quality surfaces for the game of cricket.

It is particularly important that pitches are sufficiently irrigated to allow them to be rolled effectively and to protect the clay soils from excessive cracking that can cause unpredictable ball bounce.

The key point to note is that pitches will be drying faster than normal so pitch preparation routines need to be adapted. It is likely that you will need to:

- (a) increase the number of days in which you are applying water to a pitch in preparation, and/or
- (b) shorten the time you have between first preparing a pitch and using it for the first time.

The optimum time for watering pitches is overnight when temperatures are lowest. However this is very difficult because hand-watering is often required. Some grounds with secure sites might be able to use water tractors (small self-propelled irrigators) or sprinkler hoses on timers to carryout targeted overnight watering – but be very careful if you have a sloping square because of unintended runoff to other pitches. This approach is not suitable for sites with public access or risk of vandalism/tampering.

Evening watering is preferable to watering during the day, but this can be a challenge to fit amongst junior and mid-week fixtures. Early morning watering can often be the best opportunity but try to avoid watering during the day. If you have to water during the day because of your working hours, or you are a volunteer fitting around the day job, then this is better for safe pitch preparation than not watering.

If you have covers, you can reduce the rate of drying by using them after watering. Be aware that this can affect grass condition as well as moisture content. Do not leave flat sheets on pitches for prolonged periods during hot weather – the plant will still need light, and air circulation to prevent disease.

If your pitch is drying too quickly, you can add small amounts of water: but do this evenly and in controlled, hand watered amounts. You can always add a bit more the next day, but it can be difficult to dry a pitch if the weather turns against you so keep an eye on the weather forecast.

Increase cut heights and reduce frequency of cutting on pitches and the square. Where possible stay on top of end repairs – germination during very dry periods is difficult. If you cannot water repaired ends

whilst providing enough water to pitches in preparation – make the levels safe and return to the repairs in wetter times. Germination sheets will help to retain moisture as well as to encourage germination.