

The Australian Polo Federation sun protection policy for sports



The Australian Polo Federation's sun protection policy

Rationale

Every sporting club has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for their staff, officials, volunteers, members and participants. Crucial to this is identifying hazards and risk management strategies including ultraviolet (UV) radiation and sun protection.

Overexposure to UV radiation causes skin damage (sunburn, tanning and ageing) and skin cancer. UV exposure may also increase the risk of eye diseases. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. More than two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime. However most skin cancer and UV damage can be prevented by using sun protection.

Purpose

When training, participating in, or watching sports, people often spend extended times outdoors during peak UV periods and are exposed to intense levels of direct and indirect UV. This places them at higher risk of UV damage, including sunburn and skin cancer. This policy provides effective UV protection strategies to minimise skin cancer risk and support our obligations and duty of care to all those associated with our club.

Definitions

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation - a type of energy produced by the sun and some artificial sources, such as solariums and collariums. UV cannot be seen or felt. Direct and indirect UV exposure causes damage.

Sun protection times - forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology for the time-of-day UV levels are predicted to reach 3 or higher, based on location. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types. In Victoria, UV levels typically reach 3 or higher daily from mid-August to the end of April. Participants are advised to continue to use sun protection beyond these times if outdoors for extended periods (e.g. during sports carnivals and events).

Skin cancer - UV radiation damages DNA in the skin cells. If this damage does not repair itself, or the cells continue to be exposed to UV, further damage occurs leading to skin cancer including melanoma, which can spread to other organs.

Eye disease - Exposure to UV raises the risk of diseases such as [cataract](#) or growths on the eye, such as [pterygium](#) or cancer. These conditions can take many years to develop, but any period of time spent in the sun without protection can cause damage and increases risk of disease over time. Optometry Australia recommend UV protective sunglasses and broad-brimmed hats (if possible) when outside, all year round. This recommendation should be balanced with the need to also prevent sport-related eye injuries. For sports that present participants with moderate to high risk of eye injuries such as baseball and softball, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, tennis, and archery, eye protection from injury should be considered. For these sports, eyewear that is both protective from injury and UV may be appropriate.

Implementation

We are committed to supporting effective UV protection strategies to minimise risk and require all participants to comply with this policy.

The sun protection measures listed in this policy are used for all outdoor activities **during the daily local sun protection times or when outside for extended periods**. Club officials, coaches and participants are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times via the [SunSmart widget](#) on the club's website, [free SunSmart Global UV app](#), [sunsmart.com.au](#) or [bom.gov.au](#).

Procedures

Schedules

Where possible, training, competition and events are scheduled to minimise exposure to UV.

Strategies include:

- Optimising use of shaded or indoor venues.
- Scheduling activities outside peak UV periods i.e. earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon.
- Reducing duration of warm-up activities and play with additional shaded break times.
- Frequently rotating player interchange and substitution.

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Shade

- An assessment of existing shade is conducted at outdoor venues.
- Shade from buildings, trees and other structures is used where possible for rest periods and for visitors.
- Staff, officials and volunteers rotate to shaded areas and are encouraged to take breaks in the shade.
- Where there is insufficient natural or built shade, temporary shade structures are provided or athletes and visitors are invited to bring their own temporary shade (e.g. tents, marquees or umbrellas).

Uniform / dress code (clothing, hats, sunglasses)

We acknowledge the importance of safe, inclusive uniform / dress code choices that maximise equitable participation and optimal performance.

For sports with extended competition and periods of UV exposure, practical sun protective clothing is a priority.

To support effective sun protection, participants wear:

- Cool, well-ventilated clothing that covers as much skin as practicable prioritising coverage of the chest, shoulders and upper arms (with long sleeves preferred) and leg cover at least to the mid-thigh.
- Clothing (at any price point) made from densely woven fabric. Consider layering t-shirts or skins under singlets and compression tights under shorts. Where possible UPF (UV Protection Factor) 50+ fabric with cooling or moisture-wicking properties is recommended.
- Hats that shade the head, face, neck and ears (i.e. wide-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hats) when possible. When sun protective hats are not practical in competition, caps are permitted provided sunscreen is applied to the face, neck and ears which are not protected by this style of hat.
- Close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses, where practical, that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

For sports that involve short periods of intense competition and UV exposure is limited in duration, sun protective clothing may not be practical and sunscreen application before and after competition is a priority.

This uniform/dress code also applies to sports coordinators, coaches and volunteers in-line with our OHS obligations.

Sunscreen

SPF50 or 50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is applied to any parts of skin not covered by clothing. As sunscreen does not completely block all UV, it is always used with other forms of sun protection.

Clubs ensure:

- Sunscreen is available at training and events.
- Sunscreen is stored in the shade and below 30°C. The sunscreen expiry date is monitored.
- Everyone is encouraged to apply sunscreen (the equivalent of one teaspoon per limb for adults) 20 minutes before being outdoors and to reapply every two hours or more often if swimming / sweating.
- Reapplication reminders are frequently communicated.

Leadership and education

- As part of OHS UV risk controls, duty of care and role-modelling, sports coordinators, coaches and staff:
 - Are supported to access resources, tools and learning to enhance their sun protection knowledge.
 - Plan, implement and promote sun protection measures across events.
 - Communicate UV levels and sun protection times.
 - Use sun protection measures (clothing, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses shade).
- SunSmart information is included in club guidelines/handbook which is accessible and promoted to all club members upon enrolment and throughout the season.
- Club spectators/ supporters are encouraged and reminded to bring and use their own sun protection

Policy last reviewed:	August 2026
Approved by:	APF
Next scheduled review date:	2027

Relevant documents / links

[SunSmart](#) / [SunSmart Global UV App](#) / [SunSmart widget](#)

Australian Institute of Sports Position Statement: [Sun Safe Sports](#)

[Australian Sports Commission](#) / [Clearinghouse for Sport](#) / [Vicsport](#)

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\) \(Part 2: Principles for children 1 \(c\)\)](#) / [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (2024)

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority [Radiation Protection Standard for Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation](#) (2006)

WorkSafe Victoria: [Sun protection](#) / Safe Work Australia: [Guide on exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation \(UVR\)](#) (Mar 2020)

E: sunsmart@cancervic.org.au W: sunsmart.com.au

Use all five
forms of sun
protection



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Last updated: June 2025

E: sunsmart@cancervic.org.au