



## CICA – Vic / Tas Branch Crane Safety Bulletin #327 November 2023



Greetings, today's safety bulletin is about heat and sun protection.

With Summer quickly approaching, it's crucial to remind ourselves of the importance of sun protection and overheating risks when working outside.

Prolonged exposure to the sun can lead to various health risks, including heat-related illnesses and skin damage.

**The Risks:** Working under the sun for extended periods can result in the following risks:

1. **Heat Stress:** Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can cause heat stress, leading to symptoms such as dizziness, dehydration, and heat exhaustion. Severe cases may even progress to heat stroke, which is a medical emergency.
2. **Skin Damage:** The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause sunburn, premature aging, and increase the risk of skin cancer. Construction workers are at higher risk due to prolonged sun exposure.
3. **Eye Damage:** Excessive sun exposure can also harm your eyes, leading to conditions such as cataracts and eye damage from UV rays.

### Higher Risk:

According to the [Department of Health \(Victoria\)](#) people are at greater risk of heat stress if they are:

- Aged over 65 years.
- Have a medical condition such as diabetes, kidney disease or mental illness
- Are taking medications that may affect the way the body reacts to heat such as:
  - allergy medicines (antihistamines)
  - blood pressure and heart medicines (beta-blockers)
  - seizure medicines (anticonvulsants)
  - water pills (diuretics)
  - antidepressants or antipsychotics

**Preventing Sun-Related Risks:** Although we think we all know it, it's important to be reminded of guidelines for protection while working outdoors:

1. **Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Cover skin with long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and wide-brimmed hats to minimise direct sun exposure.
2. **Use Sunscreen:** Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 50 to all exposed skin areas and reapply every two hours or more frequently if sweating.
3. **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day to prevent dehydration and heat-related illnesses.
4. **Take Regular Breaks:** Seek shade during breaks to cool down and avoid prolonged sun exposure.
5. **Use Sunglasses:** Wear sunglasses that offer UV protection to safeguard eyes from harmful rays.
6. **Time Your Work:** Whenever possible, schedule high-intensity work during cooler parts of the day, like early morning or late afternoon.
7. **Know the Signs:** Be aware of the signs of heat-related illnesses and act promptly if you or a coworker displays symptoms.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:** Supervisors and team leaders play a vital role in ensuring sun safety. Actions include:

- Educating workers about the risks associated with sun exposure and the importance of sun protection measures.
- Monitoring weather conditions and adjust work schedules accordingly.
- Encouraging and enforcing compliance with sun safety guidelines.
- Providing shade or temporary structures for breaks whenever possible.

The Department of Health provides a free service, which anyone can subscribe to, to receive heat health warnings when temperatures risk impacting people's health.

Warnings are available for nine weather districts in Victoria. Click [here to subscribe](#).



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Both your and your co-workers' health and safety are paramount, so please take the necessary precautions to protect yourself and others from the sun's harmful effects.

By following these guidelines and looking out for one another, we can ensure a safe and productive working environment throughout the sunny season.

If you would like to subscribe to these safety bulletins please send an email [here](#).

To become a CICA Member, click [here](#).

Remember: Safety is everyone's responsibility.

*Stay Safe - CICA*