Outdoor Work Policy

Purpose:

This policy establishes responsibilities for managing the means of outdoor work as a specific type of work.

Principles:

By complying with this policy JCUSA aims to:

- consult with workers occurs when proposing any changes to the work environment that may affect their health and safety;
- controlling exposure to the hazards posed by outdoor work;
- identify exposure to ultraviolet radiation and work during seasonal heat;
- inform workers of Solar Ultraviolet Radiation and the short term and long term exposure risks;
- inform of seasonal heat;
- identify the need to consider when work occurs through work organisation;
- inform workers of the PPE they must wear for protection from solar ultraviolet; and
- document the control measures for heat stress.

Scope:

This policy applies to all JCUSA Councillors and all workers (including contractors and volunteers).

Policy Statement:

JCUSA is committed to ensuring that workers work in healthy and safe conditions. For outdoor work this means minimising exposure to solar radiation, wearing PPE and assessing and controlling the hazards of working in seasonal heat.

Responsibilities:

The responsibility for managing health and safety ultimately rests with the person in control of the business or undertaking (PCBU), directors and management, which is the JCUSA Council. Workers also have important responsibilities for health and safety in the workplace.

JCUSA Council has ultimate responsibility for all workers to comply with approved policies, procedures and safe work procedures that:

- support and align with current legislation, regulations and codes of practice;
- are implemented and monitored; and
- are reviewed to evaluate the continuing effectiveness and currency.

Councillors as the Authorised Officers of JCUSA are responsible for:

- the currency of this policy;
- that the policy remains aligned to the WHS Act 2011;
- the policies implementation and ongoing review to ensure effectiveness;

- ensuring workers are aware of requirements of this policy and;
- the physical work environment for outdoor work; and
- protecting all workers – including casual and contracted employees from UV damage.

Workers must:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety;
- take reasonable care that their conduct, acts or omissions does not adversely affect the health and safety of others or property;
- comply, so far as they are reasonably able with instructions; and
- cooperate with reasonable health and safety policies or procedures that have been notified to workers.

Definitions:

Association	James Cook University Student Association
Basal Cell Carcinomas (BCC)	The most common and least dangerous type of skin cancer. They usually appear on the face and neck, as small round or flattened lumps. They can spread into the surrounding tissues and break down into ulcers if untreated.
Cataracts	Opacities of the lens of the eye.
Club	A Club is a group of like-minded individuals, the majority of whom are currently enrolled JCU, who gather to hold events and engage in activities for the mutual benefit of members and the wider JCU student cohort.
Heat cramps	Painful muscle cramps that can occur on their own or with other heat related illness such as heat exhaustion.
Heat exhaustion	A serious condition that can develop into heat stroke. A person with heat exhaustion may complain of weakness, nausea and/or “giddiness”. The person may look pale and be breathless. The skin is usually wet from sweating.
Heat fainting	Occurs when blood vessels (particularly in the legs) dilate in order to increase heat transfer to the skin and cause reduced return blood flow to the heart. This response temporarily reduces blood flow to the brain, which can cause a person to faint.
Heat stroke	A medical emergency, caused by a rise in core body temperature. A person suffering heat stroke becomes confused, and may stagger or collapse. Call an ambulance and apply urgent first aid.
Keratoses	Dry rough spots on the skin, and indicate prolonged exposure to UV radiation. They are sometimes called sunspots. Very occasionally these develop into skin cancers.
Melanomas	Least common but most dangerous of the skin cancers. They often start as a new spot, freckle or mole that changes in shape, thickness or colour, and can be a variety of colours, usually with an irregular shape. Existing moles can develop into melanomas.

	Melanomas can spread to internal organs and can cause death if they are not detected and removed. Some people, with Dysplastic Naevi Syndrome, seem to have an increased risk of developing melanomas.
Photokeratitis	Inflammation of the cornea.
Photosensitisers	Substances that cause photosensitivity.
Photosensitivity	Is an abnormally high reactivity in the skin or eyes to UV radiation including natural sunlight. This may be induced by ingestion, inhalation or skin contact with certain substances known as photosensitisers. Symptoms will vary with the amount of UV radiation, type and amount of photosensitiser, skin type, and age and sex of the person exposed.
Prickly heat	Intense, itchy red skin rash.
Pterygia	Growths of tissue on the outside of the eye which can grow over the cornea.
Skin cancers	Basal Cell Carcinoma [BCC], Squamous Cell Carcinoma [SCC] and Melanoma.
Society	Refer to Club
Squamous Cell Carcinomas	Are less common but more dangerous than BCCs. They often occur on the lips as scaly and red areas that may bleed easily and become ulcerated. They very occasionally spread to lymph nodes.
Workers	Any person who carries out work for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as an employee, contractor or subcontractor (or their employee), self-employed person, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer' or a volunteer.

Acronyms

JCUSA	James Cook University Student Association
JCU	James Cook University
PPE	Personal protective equipment

Policy:

Sporting, Club and Society and other events are often held outdoors on the grounds of the Townsville and Cairns Campus.

Workers at these events will therefore have easy access to:

- Shelter to escape the elements, temperature, sunlight, humidity or any unsafe weather conditions;
- Water via the water bubblers on campus;
- Access to protected areas to take meals and rest pauses; and
- Personal protective clothing like a wide brim hat, long-sleeved collared shirt, long pants, sunglasses and sunscreen.

If possible, reorganise outdoor work so that workers carry out alternative tasks, or work in shade, when the sun is most intense, that is 10 am–2 pm and 11 am–3 pm during daylight saving time.

Solar Ultraviolet Radiation

The intensity of the ultraviolet [UV] component of sunlight is not directly linked to the temperature or brightness of the sunlight, which means that exposure to sunlight even on cool or cloudy days can still be a hazard. The daily UV intensity is provided in weather forecasts. When the UV index exceeds 3, skin protection is recommended.

Protection against solar ultraviolet (UV) exposure will be provided for outdoor workers, with the following risk mitigation strategies:

- reorganising outdoor work if possible so that workers carry out alternative tasks, or work in shade, when the sun is most intense, that is, between 10.00am and 2.00pm (11.00am and 3.00pm when there is daylight saving);
- staff are encouraged to wear long-sleeved collared shirt, long pants, wide brim hat and sunglasses; and
- providing sunscreen.

The intensity of the ultraviolet [UV] component of sunlight is not directly linked to the temperature or brightness of the sunlight, which means that exposure to sunlight even on cool or cloudy days can still be a hazard. The daily UV intensity is provided in weather forecasts. When the UV index exceeds 3, skin protection is recommended and staff are advised to wear sunblock or clothing that protects their skin from the sun.

When working in hot conditions, the body dissipates excess heat by evaporating sweat and varying the blood flow to the skin. In order to keep the internal body temperatures within safe limits, these responses are automatically controlled by the brain and usually occur if the blood temperature exceeds 37 degrees celsius. Working in hot environments can cause a number of adverse health effects which are generally known as heat stress. Heat stress occurs when the body's heat dissipation mechanisms are unable to prevent body temperature from rising.

Short Term Exposure

Short term or acute exposure to the sun can result in sunburn and injury to the eyes. The effects of sunburn can range from mild reddening of the skin, to severe blistering, depending upon the duration of the exposure. There is usually a latent period of 8 to 24 hours between exposure and the effects.
As a guide, the effects of exposure of untanned unprotected skin to summer sunlight between 11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time will be:

- 12 minutes of exposure will cause mild sunburn;
- 30 minutes of exposure will cause appreciable discomfort;
- 60 minutes of exposure will result in blistering and peeling;. and
- 120 minutes of exposure will result in permanent skin damage.

The short term effects to the eyes are:

- Photoconjunctivitis - inflammation of the conjunctiva; and
- Photokeratitis - inflammation of the cornea.

Long Term Exposure

Permanent damage to both the skin and and the eyes can result from prolonged exposure to the sun. The results are:

- the formation of cataracts,
- the formation of pterygia,
- damage to the cornea,
- premature aging of the skin,
- keratoses and
- skin cancer

The three main types of skin cancer in Australia are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma.

Photosensitising Substances

Photosensitising substances will increase the effects of exposure to UV. They include:

- industrial chemicals, such as dyes, coal tars and derivatives and chlorinated hydrocarbons;
- drugs;
- plants;
- oils & fragrances; and
- sunscreen additives.

Seasonal Heat

Outdoor workers undertaking tasks during seasonal heat are at risk of suffering mild to serious heat-related illnesses, generally known as heat stress.

The term Heat Stress can cause the following effects ranging from mild discomfort to serious illness:

- Prickly heat;
- Heat cramps;
- Heat fainting;
- Heat exhaustion; and
- Heat stroke.

Apart from the above effects, working in seasonal heat can effect health and safety in a variety of ways, including:

- reducing ability to concentrate;
- increasing discomfort when wearing protective clothing and using protective equipment;
- aggravating the effects of other hazards such as noise; and
- aggravating pre-existing illnesses.

The human body is able to maintain a viable core temperature through a variety of physiological mechanisms. One mechanism of dissipating excess body heat is by evaporative cooling, which relies on the evaporation of sweat from the skin. The evaporation rate varies depending upon factors such as the humidity and air movement over the skin. Evaporation of sweat results in loss of fluid in the body and dehydration can occur unless fluid balance is maintained.

The risk of heat stress arises from a combination of factors including:

- intensity of physical work;
- climatic conditions (eg. low air movement, high humidity levels and high air temperature);
- insufficient water consumption;
- individual factors that may cause dehydration (such as poor diet, vomiting, diarrhoea or alcohol and caffeine consumption);
- individual medical conditions that may cause heat stress (such as heart problems, diabetes or hypertension);
- inadequate cooling off or rest periods;
- inappropriate clothing;
- individual medication that may affect the body's temperature regulation; and
- an individual's age, general physical fitness and weight.

Work Organisation

In order to protect outdoor workers from the effects of UV solar radiation and heat stress, the working environment and/or working arrangements will be reasonable controlled within JCUSA operating capacity.

The following measures have been implemented in combination to adequately protect outdoor workers from seasonal heat and UV radiation.

- Allocation of outdoor work to certain times of day. During periods of seasonal heat and/or humidity, moderate and heavy outdoor work should be assigned to cooler parts of the day.
- Provision of shade;

- Outdoor work should be conducted in shaded areas as much as possible.
- Provision of alternative tasks in hot and humid conditions. Consideration should be given to ceasing outdoor tasks involving heavy manual work in favour of alternative moderate or light manual work.
- Provision that outdoor workers take hourly rest breaks in a cool place as close as possible to the place where they are working. They should not have to walk a long distance nor rest in a hot unshaded location.
- Provision of fluids to prevent dehydration via water bubblers on campus.

Personal protection requirements for Solar UV

The types of personal protection JCUSA workers are to adhere to includes:

- Clothing that covers arms and legs and body;
- JCUSA will provide a broad-brimmed hat that shades the face and neck for outdoor workers only;
- Sunglasses; and
- Apply SPF30+ broad spectrum water-resistant sunscreen every two hours that is supplied by JCUSA.

Control Measures for Heat Stress

It is recommended that outdoor workers:

- Wear a hat and light sun protective clothing;
- Drink at least one litre of water per hour when working in the sun;
- Take breaks in cool shaded areas to enable a rapid return of core temperature to normal;
- Acclimatise to outdoor work gradually;
- Eat at regular intervals during the day to ensure their energy and salt levels are maintained; and
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and drugs which can increase urine output and therefore fluid loss.

Outdoor Night Time Work

Adequate lighting after dark will be required for outdoor paths around the workplace and car parks. Outdoor lighting need to allow workers to move about easily without risk of falling.

Consultation

Workers will be consulted about existing JCUSA facilities that they are already provided with when there are any changes that may affect the adequacy of the facilities. Consultation will involve sharing of information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and taking those views into account before making decisions on health and safety matters.

Related Legislation and Documents:

Fair Work Act 2009 (FW Act) (CTH)

Fair Work Regulations 2009 (CTH)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (QLD)

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011(QLD)

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice 2021

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2021

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice 2021

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, Workplace Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination Code of Practice 2021

POL003 Work Health Safety Policy

POL010 Consultation Policy

POL017 First Aid Policy

POL019 Emergency Preparedness Policy

POL026 Personal Protective Equipment Policy

PRO015 Outdoor Work Procedure

Administration

Note: Printed copies of this policy are uncontrolled and currency can only be assumed at the time of printing.

Approval Authority	JCUSA Council
Version Number:	V1.1
Date for next review:	19/07/2022
Revision History	Located in the Document Record Management System