

media release



MASTERS OF OUR INDUSTRY

Master Builders Association of Victoria
ABN: 38 004 255 654

01/12/09

Summer safety - Builders urged to be Sun Smart

Victoria's peak building industry body, the Master Builders Association, is urging all builders to mark today, the first day of summer, by reminding their staff about the importance of sun protection.

Master Builders Executive Director, Brian Welch, said the dangers of sun exposure increase as the UV index rises in summer months.

"There are 1,700 deaths in Australia due to skin cancer each year. Statistics from Sun Smart Australia state that two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer by the age of 70," said Mr Welch.

"For those working outdoors, the danger season for UV exposure has begun. It is time to throw on appropriate clothing, a broad brimmed hat, sunglasses and sunscreen," he said.

"The risk is not related to temperature. Even on cooler days, UV radiation can still climb to high levels and can lead to skin damage which increases the risk of skin cancer.

"Sunburn can occur in as little as 15 minutes on a fine summer day. All types of sunburn, whether serious or mild, can cause permanent and irreversible skin damage and can lay the groundwork for skin cancer later in life.

Health risks of overexposure to UV radiation include:

- Sunburn and other skin changes: sunburn ranges from skin reddening to severe and painful blistering of the skin;
- Cataract of the eye lens: opacities in the eye lens lead to decreased vision and eventual blindness;
- Skin carcinoma: several types of malignant skin tumours of the non-melanoma type are caused by UV radiation; and,
- Malignant melanoma of the skin: this is a very severe cancer that can develop many years after excessive exposure to the Sun.

"The UV index is a measure of UV radiation. The higher the UV index, the higher the risk of skin and eye damage. Use the UV index available at www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv to plan sun-safe work activities.

"Contact Master Builders on 9411 4555 or visit www.mbav.com.au for more, including info on Master Builders award winning DVD called *Get Smart - preventing skin cancer in building and construction.*"

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