



Protect yourself from the sun

It has been two years since our last convention, and my, how things have changed. We are facing some serious challenges and have to be ready in a heartbeat's time. The USPS is hell-bent on trying to destroy the very thing that makes us a unique institution nowadays, six-day service!

At the convention in Anaheim this year, the delegates will be getting educated on how the NALC is responding to this challenge as well as building the foundation for our up-and-coming National Agreement negotiations. It has been a long time coming; our agreement has been in effect for the past four years and our tone for the upcoming bargaining will be set by the delegates in attendance.

In preparation for summer, included below is an excerpt from the CDC on skin cancer awareness.

Prevention—Protection from sun exposure is important all year round, not just during the summer or at the beach. Ultraviolet (UV) rays can reach you on cloudy and hazy days, as well as bright and sunny days. UV rays also reflect off of surfaces like water, cement, sand, and snow.

The hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. daylight saving time (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. standard time) are the most hazardous for UV exposure in the continental United States. UV rays are the greatest during the late spring and early summer in North America.

CDC recommends easy options for sun protection:

- Use sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher, and both UVA and UVB protection.
- Wear clothing to protect exposed skin.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears and neck.
- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.

Sunscreen—The sun's UV rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. Put on sunscreen before you go outside, even on slightly cloudy or cool days. Don't forget to put a thick layer on all parts of exposed skin.

How sunscreen works: Most sun protection products work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering sunlight. They contain chemicals that interact with the skin to protect it from UV rays. All products do not have the same ingredients; if your skin reacts badly to one product, try

another one or call a doctor.

- **SPF**—Sunscreens are assigned an SPF number that rates their effectiveness in blocking UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. You should use a sunscreen with at least SPF 15.
- **Reapplication**—Sunscreen wears off. Put it on again if you stay out in the sun for more than two hours and after you swim or do things that make you sweat.
- **Expiration date**—Check the sunscreen's expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years, but its shelf life is shorter if it has been exposed to high temperatures.
- **Cosmetics**—Some make-up and lip balms contain some of the same chemicals used in sunscreens. If they do not have at least SPF 15, don't use them by themselves.

Clothing—Loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and long pants made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection from the sun's UV rays. Darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors.

If wearing this type of clothing isn't practical, at least try to wear a T-shirt. Keep in mind that a typical T-shirt has an SPF rating lower than 15, so use other types of protection as well.

Hats—For the most protection, wear a hat with a brim all the way around that shades your face, ears and the back of your neck. A tightly woven fabric, such as canvas, works best to protect your skin from UV rays. Avoid hats with holes that let sunlight through. A darker hat may offer more UV protection.

If you wear a baseball cap, you should also protect your ears and the back of your neck by wearing sunscreen with at least SPF 15.

Sunglasses—These protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts. They also protect the tender skin around your eyes from sun exposure.

Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection. Most sunglasses sold in the United States, regardless of cost, meet this standard. Wrap-around sunglasses work best because they block UV rays from sneaking in from the side. ☒