

**For immediate release  
July 17**

- WHAT:** Airport firefighters paint their faces red and stage a mock beach scene with blow-up palm tree, deckchair, beachball and parasol to highlight the dangers of getting sunburnt on holiday as part of Cancer Research UK's SunSmart campaign
- WHEN:** 12.15 Tuesday, July 17, 2007
- WHERE:** Birmingham International Airport, Birmingham, B26 3QJ (Meet at the Information Desk, Millennium Link, between the 2 terminals)
- WHY:** To raise awareness of the need to be safe in the sun in a bid to prevent 2,300 deaths a year from skin cancer
- WHO:** Paula Young/Jane Redman, regional press officers for Cancer Research UK on 07050 267085

## **BIRMINGHAM FIREFIGHTERS GO RED IN THE FACE TO HELP SAVE LIVES THIS SUMMER**

DON'T burn on holiday! That's the message from red faced firefighters at Birmingham International airport who have teamed up with Cancer Research UK to promote the charity's lifesaving SunSmart campaign.

The SunSmart campaign focuses on those most at risk of skin cancer and the charity has its sights firmly fixed on holidaymakers this year.

To illustrate the dangers of burning, firefighters based at the airport painted their faces red and created a mock beach scene as Cancer Research UK staff gave sun safety advice to travellers.

Karen Doyle, senior research nurse for Cancer Research UK in the West Midlands, said: "This stunt is a light-hearted way to get across a very serious message – to make sure you never burn.

"Getting sunburnt can double your risk of skin cancer and yet many people still believe that going red is all part of getting a tan.

"Talking to ordinary people jetting off for their holidays it's clear that we still have a long way to go when it comes to educating people about how to enjoy the sun safely and reduce their risk of skin cancer."

More than 630 people a year are diagnosed with skin cancer in the West Midlands and experts believe that the rates are set to treble in the next 30 years unless there is a radical change of behaviour among Brits desperate to sunbathe.

A recent survey commissioned by Cancer Research UK showed that in the West Midlands, 37 per cent thought they would get sunburnt on their summer holiday. And one in four thought getting burnt was all part of getting a tan.

Karen said: "Getting sunburnt increases the risk of skin cancer in general. But the kind of sunbathing binges that happen when people go to much sunnier climates and bake on the beach is particularly dangerous.

"This kind of intense exposure to the sun, often leading to reddening or burning, particularly increases the risk of malignant melanoma. And each year in Britain almost 2000 people die from this form of skin cancer.

"Of course it's not just a problem for those who go abroad. People, especially those with fair skin, lots of moles or freckles or a family history of skin cancer, can be at risk of burning on summer days in the UK."

Cancer Research UK advises anyone with a new unusual skin blemish or a mole that starts to change to get it checked out by their doctor, especially if they have had sunburn in the past.

Karen added: "Signs to watch out for include a mole getting bigger, a mole with a ragged outline or one with a mixture of different shades of brown and black.

"Also if a mole gets inflamed or starts to bleed or itch, then get it checked out. Chances are it will not be skin cancer, but best to be on the safe side. Early detection saves lives.

To reduce the risk of skin cancer and enjoy being out in the sun, the SunSmart campaign encourages people to know their skin type and use the UV index to find out when they need to protect themselves. They should also follow the SunSmart key messages:

- **S**pend time in the shade between 11 and 3
  - **M**ake sure you never burn
  - **A**im to cover up with a t-shirt, hat and sunglasses
  - **R**emember to take extra care with children
  - **T**hen use factor 15+ sunscreen
- ... Also report mole changes or unusual skin growths promptly to your doctor.

For more information visit [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)

Ends

**For more information please contact Paula Young or Jane Redman on 07050 267085 or email [centralpress@cancer.org.uk](mailto:centralpress@cancer.org.uk)**

**Notes to editors:**

SunSmart is the UK's national skin cancer prevention campaign commissioned by the UK Health Departments and run by Cancer Research UK. The campaign focuses on those most at risk of skin cancer and the key target audience this year is holidaymakers.

- Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK.
- The number of skin cancer cases is increasing year on year. The main risk factor for skin cancer is exposure to sunlight. Up to 90% of skin cancers could be prevented by being SunSmart.
- Over 75,000 new cases of skin cancer are registered each year in the UK. Some experts estimate the number of cases to be in excess of 100,000 as many cases are not reported.
- Each year over 1,800 people die from malignant melanoma.
- Cases of malignant melanoma have more than doubled over the past 20 years. Malignant melanoma is the second most common cancer for 20-39 year olds.
- Over the last 20 years, malignant melanoma incidence has increased faster than any other cancer.
- There are more skin cancer deaths in the UK than in Australia, even though Australia has more cases of the disease.

Find out more at [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)