

# Providing Cool Comfort from Harmful UV Rays



PHOTO COURTESY OF APOLLO SUNGUARD.

New shade structure at a playground at Belafonte Park, Fla. provides needed shade.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released in June of 2006 an update to its 2002 *Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer*, which outlines steps that school communities can take to develop a comprehensive approach to reducing the risk for skin cancer. This is a valuable resource for anybody or any group that is looking for guidance, resources and options for providing shade to protect children and people from over exposure to harmful UV rays.

The new manual has been created to support school communities in their implementation of the *Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer* and, specifically, to help schools create and maintain a physical environment that supports sun safety by ensuring that school grounds have adequate shade.

The guidelines include the following recommendations:

- Establish policies that reduce exposure to solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- Provide and maintain physical and social environments that support sun safety.
- Provide opportunities for students to gain the knowledge, develop the attitudes, and practice the skills needed to prevent skin cancer.
- Involve family members in skin cancer prevention efforts.
- Provide pre-service and in-service skin cancer prevention

education for school administrators, teachers, coaches, school nurses, and other professionals who work with students.

- Support sun-safety policies, sun-safe environments, and skin cancer prevention education with school health services.
- Evaluate the implementation of policies, environmental change, education, family involvement, professional development, and health services.

In addition to creating natural shade areas, the guide gives some excellent suggestions on how to plan and create shade for the most important areas, such as playgrounds or areas where children play or congregate. The guide looks at options such as solid roof structures and shade cloth structures.

The CDC notes that the use cloth or structural fabric supported by a framework or poles is a good and economical option. "This strategy often is used when the goal is to cover large play areas without employing extensive structural support," according to the CDC's report. "Shade cloth is typically a knitted or woven fabric that is rated as to how much sun is blocked. Transmission of the sun's rays through the fabric depends on the tightness of the weave or knit, with more densely woven or knitted fabric blocking out more of the sun's radiation."

For more information on the guide, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).



Shade structure at MAGTF 29 Palms, Calif., provides shade for marines training in the hot desert.

### Protecting Playgrounds

Protecting children from the harmful rays of the sun while they are on playgrounds is of the utmost concern, and many, whether it is a park and recreation department, school or military base, are heeding the call for more shade.

In Belafonte Park, Fla., which is part of the Belafonte-Tacolcy Center, a private nonprofit agency for children in the City of Miami, creating shade for the playgrounds was of paramount importance. The city needed shade over the park's new playground equipment but a single, standard shade structure would be difficult and costly due to the large size and height of the playground equipment.

After researching its options, the city decided it wanted to use fabric structures from Apollo Sunguard Systems' innovative, obstacle-free PlayTowers line. The shade structures attach directly to playground equipment, eliminating the need for large columns that secure into the ground.

Apollo Sunguard was awarded the project as part of its state contract, and the park's new playground equipment was retrofitted with two large PlayTowers (*see photo on page 32*) and one single-column PlayBrella. Now, the children are enjoying safe outdoor fun and healthful exercise while being protected from the sun.

### Military Uses

At MAGTF 29 Palms in Southern California, the base was looking to provide cool comfort for marines training in the desert.

The base installed about 50 units (*see photo above*) that are going to be used to shade marines training for upcoming deployment.

"Due to the fact we had several Platoon and Company sized Marine Units sitting in outdoor classrooms during the hottest part of the year, we decided to try to find some type of overhead structure that would provide Marines undergoing training protection from the hot sun," says Tim Gelinis, Section Head MOUT Staff, Urban Warfare Training Facility.

The base has set up a mock war zone where they train and

## Skin Cancer Fact Sheet

The following is the 2006 skin cancer fact sheet provided by the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD):

- More than one million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year.
- Both basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma have a better than 95 percent five-year cure rate if detected and treated early.
- An estimated 10,710 people will die of skin cancer this year, 7,910 from melanoma and 2,800 from other skin cancers.
- There will be about 111,900 new cases of melanoma in 2006.
- One American dies of melanoma almost every hour (every 67 minutes).
- The incidence of melanoma has increased 690 percent from 1950 to 2001, and the overall mortality rate increased 165 percent during this same period.
- The World Health Organization estimates that as many as 60,000 people a year worldwide die from too much sun, mostly from malignant skin cancer. Of these deaths, 48,000 are from melanoma, and 12,000 are from other skin cancers. About 90 percent of these cancers are caused by ultraviolet light from the sun.
- The estimated total direct cost associated with the treatment of melanoma in 2004 was \$291 million.
- In 2004, the total direct cost associated with the treatment for non-melanoma skin cancer was \$1.5 billion. Of that, \$1.2 billion is attributed to care received in physician offices.
- More than 73 percent of skin cancer deaths are from melanoma.
- Invasive melanoma is the fifth most common cancer in men and the seventh most common cancer in women.
- Melanoma is the second most common cancer in women aged 20-29.
- One in five Americans will develop some form of skin cancer during their lifetime.
- Five or more sunburns double your risk of developing skin cancer.

the shade structures will provide needed relief from the sun. Several super span units are used for training schools and 40 smaller units for eating and relaxing areas.

The base contacted Shade Structures (Sun Ports) and decided to try its shade Structures as overhead classroom protection. According to Gelinis, the base purchased several Platoon- and Company-size shade structures and had them installed throughout the Urban Warfare Training Facility. In addition, it had two large structures installed above its Cafés, which have all held up well.

"We have had absolutely no problems with the structures and they held up extremely well during the recent high winds we had," says Gelinis. "We also found all Shade Structures met or exceeded our expectations in every way. We were extremely pleased with both quality of material and quality of workmanship of the Shade Structures. The Shade Structure employees were professional and competent and did a super job for us."

The base chose ShadeSure Fabric in the Arizona fabric, color which is a desert sand color that blends well with the environment. The ShadeSure fabric utilized by Sun Ports is a unique knitted polyethylene mesh fabric that allows for cool air flow while blocking up to 98 percent of the sun's harmful UV-B rays.

—GRF