

Protection of Skin

Toolbox Talk Presenter's Introduction

Dermatitis accounts for over half of all working days lost through industrial sickness.

Some types of dermatitis if not treated can lead to cancer.

INTRODUCTION

Dermatitis is an inflammatory skin condition which is neither infectious nor contagious. It is caused by certain irritants contained in many industrial materials.

Although dermatitis is not itself an infection, it can lead to infection when the skin's natural barriers break down.

Be aware of the substances you are using in your work. Pay attention to signs on the outside of containers. All harmful substances should be accompanied by a COSHH assessment. If you have not been trained tell your supervisor.

CONTACT HAZARDS TO SKIN

- Mineral oils including fuel oils and machine oils, can give you bad skin conditions, oil acne or even cancer.
- Constant skin contact with oily rags in overall pockets can cause serious health hazards.
- Chemicals including alkalis, acids and chromates can penetrate the skin causing ulcers and dermatitis.
- Cement can cause chronic dermatitis. Wet cement becomes even more alkaline and more harmful to the skin.
- Solvents and de-greasers, including paraffin and thinners, dissolve natural oils on the surface layers of the skin leaving it open to infection.
- Tar, pitch and bitumen products cause blisters and oil acne. They can also cause tar warts, leading to cancer.
- Epoxy-resin hardeners, glass-fibre, some hard woods and fungicides irritate the skin and can lead to dermatitis.
- Extremes of sunshine, temperature and humidity make the skin more susceptible to dermatitis and other skin problems.

PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN

- Avoid skin contact with hazardous substances.
- Use barrier creams.
- Wear the correct personal protective equipment.
- Ensure you are wearing the right kind of gloves for the job, different gloves have different levels of protection.
- Keep your skin clean and use after-wash skin cream.
- Keep your workplace clean.
- Get first aid for cuts and grazes and keep them covered.
- Don't use abrasives or solvents to clean your skin.
- Don't let synthetic resins or glue harden on your skin.
- Look for changed or newly formed moles or any skin colouration. Pay particular attention to growths which appear on the face, especially around the eyes and nose or on the backs of hands.
- Examine your skin for the appearance of warts, especially on the scrotum (if applicable).
- Never wear oil-contaminated clothes next to your skin.

Note to supervisors:

Now inform your workforce of the company policy regarding skin care.

ANY QUESTIONS?

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Q: What should not be used to clean your skin?

Q: How can exposure to the sun affect you?

REMEMBER:

**THE PURPOSE OF THE SKIN IS TO KEEP
THE OUTSIDE OUT
AND
THE INSIDE IN
PROTECT YOUR SKIN**