



# SKINCARE & HAND HYGIENE IN THE WORKPLACE – IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICE

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# Agenda



- How to identify and implement the right skin care system for your business
- The importance of hand hygiene at work
- How to introduce best practice to your workplace

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# Why is skin care important?

- Skin provides protection against chemicals, wet-work, harmful substances, microbiological and physical agents
- A damaged skin barrier accelerates the damage caused
- The skin is not a complete barrier: chemicals and substances can reach other parts of the body via the skin

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# Occupational Skin disease



- 2010-2012: 122 new diagnoses of skin disease per 100 000 workers per year (THOR-GP)
- Equates to over 35 000 new diagnoses of occupation skin disease per year
- 2012: 1487 new diagnoses by dermatologists (EPIDERM)
- Of these 76% contact dermatitis and 21% skin cancers
- 2010-2012 working days lost reported by THOR GP scheme: skin disease accounted for 3% of total days sickness absence.

Source: HSE/ THOR-EPIDERM

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# Skin disorders at work



- Most cases of occupational skin disease are contact dermatitis
- 38% allergic contact; 46% irritant contact (EPIDERM 1996-2012)
- Most common agents cited as causes of skin disease:
  - soaps & cleaners
  - wet work
  - rubber chemicals & materials
- External agents mostly in contact with hands and arms, so 95% of work-related skin disease in this area

Source: HSE

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# Skin disorders at work – High risk occupations



- Floristry
- Catering
- Hair & Beauty

- Health Services
- Dentistry
- Printing

- Metal Machining
- Motor Vehicle Repair
- Construction

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# The importance of hand hygiene in every business



- 1 in 5 people do not wash their hands after visiting the washroom
- Of those that do, only 30% use soap
- Hands are the main vehicle for transmitting germs

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# Assessing the needs of your business



## You must provide:

- Wash basins with hot and cold (or warm) running water;
- Showers for dirty work which may result in contamination of the skin;
- Soap and towels or a hand drier

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# Your work environment



- Office areas
- Washrooms
- Public/communal areas
- Food preparation and service
- Medical areas
- Manufacturing
- Wet working
- Warehouse
- Mobile workers
- Outdoor workers



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# Skin Safety at Work



## Higher risk areas:

- Working with chemicals and (hazardous) substances
- Wet working
- Outdoor working

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# Chemicals and (hazardous) substances

## CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH) ASSESSMENT

COMPANY:			PROJECT:			
SUBSTANCE:			SUPPLIER:			
CONTENTS:						
HAZARD LEVEL: High		Medium	Low	STATE: Solid	Liquid	Gas
ACTIVITY: Mixing	Hand Applying	Loading	Cutting	Pouring	Spraying	
AREA: Outside	Inside Well Ventilated	Inside Poorly Ventilated	Confined Space			

### Hazards

Irritant	Harmful	Flammable	Explosive
Toxic	Very Toxic	Corrosive	Environment

### Health Risks

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### Personal Protective Equipment to be used

Area Hazardous Substance to be used											
	Gloves	Glasses	Goggles	Face Shield	Footwear	Protective Clothing	Dust mask	FFP1 Mask	FFP2 Mask	FFP3 Mask	Respirator
Outside											
Inside well ventilated											
Inside poorly ventilated											
Confined space											
<b>Other Details</b>											

# S200

## Skin or eye contact

### COSHH essentials: Harm via skin or eye contact



This information will help employers comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure to chemicals and protect workers' health.

It is also useful for trade union safety representatives.

This sheet covers general points on skin exposure.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

### Control approach S Supplementary advice

#### Contact with skin and eyes

- ✓ Full containment is normally needed. Use permits to work to breach containment. Where possible, check the effectiveness of control by monitoring.

#### Exposure control

- ✓ Consider substituting a safer chemical or product. If chemical substitution is not possible, reduce the chance of contact with skin or eyes.

#### ✓ Reduce the chance of contact with skin or eyes:

- modify the process to minimise handling;
- change the physical form – to granules from dusty powders, or to pastes from liquids;
- segregate clean and dirty areas to reduce the spread of contamination;
- provide smooth, impervious, easily cleaned surfaces;
- launder work clothing regularly;
- provide clean washrooms, with pre-work creams and after-work creams for skin care;
- tell workers about the risk and about good personal hygiene;
- check skin for dryness or soreness regularly;
- clean the workroom regularly;
- provide eye protection where there are splash risks; and
- plan how to deal with spillages swiftly and safely.

#### ✓ Workers should wash their hands before and after eating, drinking, smoking, using the lavatory or applying cosmetics.

- ✓ See Sheet S101 for advice on selecting protective gloves and S102 for other PPE.

#### Containment

- ✓ Prepare a written method statement and use a Permit to Work before breaching containment. If necessary, use PPE and respiratory protective equipment (RPE).
- ✓ Seek advice from a health and safety professional if you are uncertain. See 'Useful links'.

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# Occupational Dermatitis

Definition: Inflammation of the skin



## Symptoms:

- Redness
- Soreness
- Cracked skin
- Swelling
- Bleeding
- Blisters or weals



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# Occupational Dermatitis

2 main types:

- **Irritant contact dermatitis (ICD)**

Caused by products that dry out and damage the skin, e.g. detergents, solvents, oils, prolonged/frequent contact with water

- **Allergic contact dermatitis (ACD)**

Caused by an allergic reaction to something that comes into contact with the skin. Once skin is sensitised to the substance, contact dermatitis may reoccur.



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# Avoiding dermatitis



**A**void contact with materials that cause dermatitis

**P**rotect the skin

**C**heck for early signs of dermatitis

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# Avoid contact

Avoid direct contact between unprotected hands and substances, products and wet work where this is sensible and practical:

- Eliminate the substance/product/wet work altogether
- Substitute the product/substance for something less harmful
- Introduce controls (such as tools or PPE) to keep a safe working distance between skin and substances/products/wet work







# Protect the skin



- Advise workers how to look after their skin
- Remind them to wash any contamination from their skin promptly
- Inform them about the importance of thorough drying after washing
- Supply pre-work and moisturising after-work creams
- Provide appropriate protective clothing/gloves
- Adhere to glove manufacturer's guidelines



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# Check the skin

- Regular skin checks can spot the early stages of dermatitis
- Early detection can prevent more serious dermatitis from developing
- Steps can be taken to start treating the condition
- Checks can help indicate a possible lapse in your preventative measures and the need to reassess the situation



Health and Safety Executive

## Skin checks for dermatitis

Regularly check your skin for early signs of dermatitis

Look for...

### Dryness Itching Redness

...which can develop into  
**flaking, scaling  
cracks, swelling  
and blisters**

If you think you may have dermatitis, report it to your employer  
Contact name

Your employer may need to refer you to an Occupational Health Doctor or Nurse

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

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# Wet working



- Long lasting or repeated contact with water, especially with soaps or other chemicals
- Long lasting: more than 2 hours per day
- Repeated contact: washing hands more than 20 to 40 times per day

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# Outdoor workers



- **Cold conditions**
  - Sore and chapped skin
  - Vulnerable from irritants and sensitisers
- **The sun**
  - UV-A – aging and cancer causing
  - UV-B – burning
- **Contaminated water**
  - Weils disease

**SKIN CANCER RISK FOR  
OUTDOOR WORKERS!**

**EMPLOYERS OBLIGED TO OFFER PROTECTION ADVICE**

Outdoor workers are particularly vulnerable, working long hours in the sun - often during times when UV is at its most dangerous!

[www.skcin.org](http://www.skcin.org)

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# Skin Cancer

- Outdoor workers have a higher than average risk of developing skin cancer.
- Workers in the construction sector are SIX times more likely to develop skin disease than the general population.



Sources: Skcin SSWP/ Occupation and work-related ill-health in UK construction workers.

[Stocks SJ](#), [Turner S](#), [McNamee R](#), [Carder M](#), [Hussey L](#), [Agius RM](#).

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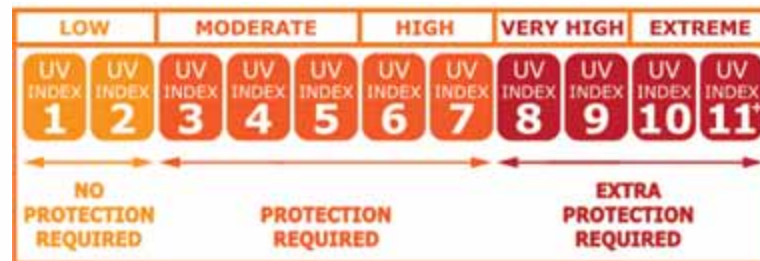
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# Skin Cancer



- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the UK
- 125,000 new cases diagnosed each year
- 2746 deaths per year
- Long-term exposure to the sun causes skin damage
- Every episode of sunburn increases your risk of getting skin cancer
- You are at risk if you are working outside in sunny, shady or cloudy conditions – protect from UV index level 3
- Employers have a duty of care to protect their employees from hazards in the workplace



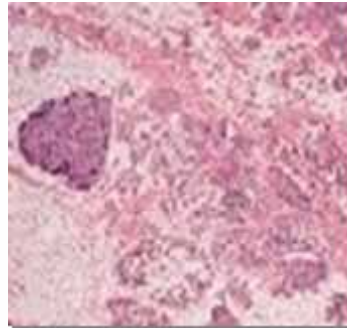
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# Skin cancer



**Skin cancer,  
Melanoma –  
Raised, Dark  
Lesion**



**Photomicrograph  
showing skin  
cancer**



**Serious sunburn**

**UV radiation should be considered an  
occupational hazard for people who work  
outdoors\***

**\* Source: Health & Safety Executive**

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# Choose a 6 Step Skin Care System



- 4-step product system
- 2-step support activities

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# Step 1: Protect



- Pre-Work Cream – specially formulated
- Apply a pre-work cream to clean hands before each work period, or after washing hands
- Not a replacement for gloves
- Makes skin easier to clean
- Help protect the skin against irritants and soilings which may become ingrained



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# Step 1: Protect



- Outdoor workers – sun protection
- Cover up – protect all exposed areas
- Apply factor 30 sunscreen with broad spectrum UV-A protection to all risk areas – face, neck, tops of/behind ears and arms
- Apply to clean, dry skin
- Apply 15 to 20 minutes before going outside
- Re-apply liberally every 2-3 hours
- Use sun protection every day over the mid-year period (Easter to end August at least – whenever UV index is 3 or more)
- Check skin regularly for unusual moles/spots



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# Step 2: Cleanse



- Use sealed cartridge systems to optimise hygiene levels
- Cleanse even after wearing gloves
- Do not use harsh cleansers or substitutes
- Use appropriate cleansers – industrial, healthcare or food sector have specific cleanser types
- Use non-solvent based cleansers wherever possible
- Dry hands thoroughly

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# Step 3: Sanitise



- Choose an alcohol based sanitiser for use without water
- Widely used in the health and food sectors and growing use in other areas
- Use regularly between hand washing
- Provide to mobile workers
- Provide at “germ transfer hotspots” in an industrial or commercial environment
- Alcohol foam sanitiser is more effective in terms of cost and performance and users prefer it compared to gel

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# Step 4: Restore



- Apply an after-work cream at least after the morning & afternoon working periods
- Helps replenish skin's natural oils & prevent dryness
- Use 'Super-Hydrating' creams for hard working or dry skin

*"The regular use of an after-work emollient is probably the best way of reducing the chance of dermatitis occurring if contact with irritants cannot be avoided"*  
*(John SC English, 'A Handbook of Occupational Dermatology')*



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# Mobile workers



- No/restricted access to water
- Waterless protect/ cleanse/sanitise systems for industrial and health workers
- Hand sanitiser for germ control until suitable hand washing facilities are available

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# Washroom skincare



- Sealed cartridge systems
- Foaming soaps for optimum cost in use
- Good quality cleanser to avoid the risk of skincare issues
- Perfume and dye free soaps reduce risk of skin irritation

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# Step 5: Educate



Choose a supplier who can help you educate your employees:

- Training
- Support materials

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## Step 6: Audit



Choose a skin care provider who will support you. Regular audits are advisable to:

- Check products are being used as recommended
- Check on any skin care issues

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# More information



[www.itsinyourhands.org](http://www.itsinyourhands.org)

It's in Your Hands • Health Risks at Work • HSE website • Skcin •  
Skin care product manufacturers/ suppliers

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# Summary



- Using a skin safety system can greatly reduce the risk of skin disease
- Regular washing of hands reduces the risk of germ transfer
- Be aware of the substances that can harm your skin and take simple precautions to protect you and your team
- Train your staff to be aware of the risks in their work environment and how to use the skin care system you have chosen to protect them



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