

SKIN CARE

- Skin care is normally achieved by the use of hand cleansers and restorers.
- Hand protection is provided by selecting and using correct gloves for the work you are going to complete.
- Barrier creams should not be used, as they are frequently ineffective, potentially hold contaminants close to the skin and promote the development of bacteria when worn with impervious gloves.



Skin Care

Why care for the skin?

Exposure to substances used in the workplace can potentially cause both short and long term damage to skin.

Skin damage includes:

- **Dermatitis** – this can present itself with a wide number of symptoms, but almost always involves reddening of the skin, possibly itching, cracking, skin loss, thinning of the outer layers of the skin, loss of elasticity.
- **Fungal infection** – sometimes as a result of open wounds caused by dermatitis.
- **Thickening of the nails**, roughening of the skin and loss of sensitivity.
- **Cancer** – including skin cancer.
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Skin damage commonly affects the hands and lower arms, but can be present anywhere, including the feet, legs, arms and genitals.

Almost invariably skin damage is unsightly and unappealing – however it can readily be treated and prevented.

Ask yourself – would you like to shake hands with someone with open wounds and an unpleasant skin condition?

If your answer is no – then doesn't it make sense to take precautions and look after your skin?

Looking after your skin

You should cleanse your skin regularly. This will normally be the hands, but could also include the face or other parts of the body.

You should not allow contaminants to remain in contact with skin any longer than absolutely necessary, and any accidental contamination must be removed immediately.

Of particular concern are:

- oil, including mineral oils, hydraulic and lubricating oils
- fuels, including diesel and gas oil
- cement, lime, pulverized fuel ash, mortar or wet concrete
- oil based compounds such as bitumen, grease, etc
- chemicals, including acid-based liquids incorporating hydrochloric or sulphuric acid, acetic acid, etc
- powder additives, such as colours added to mortar, screed and concrete.

Any contamination involving these products must be removed immediately, wherever it is present on the body.

You should not use cold water to clean the skin, unless you are working at a remote location away from such facilities. In these circumstances you should have a suitable hand cleanser and sanitizer that does not require water and rinsing.

Water used for removing contamination should be at a temperature of about 35°C – feeling slightly warmer than tepid.

A variety of different hand cleansers are available. Some examples (supplied by Gojo) are listed below.

- Hand cleanser with scrubbing particles - removing light to moderate soiling including oils and greases.
- Hand cleaner with crushables – for heavy soiling and contamination with oils and greases, plus asphalt and tar – suitable for locations where vehicle maintenance takes place.
- Pumice hand cleanser – removing light to moderate soiling, useful for places where machinery servicing or vehicle maintenance takes place.
- Hand cleanser with crushables and scrubbing particles – for adhesive-based soiling, such as paints, glues, stains and coatings.



Never scrub the skin using an abrasive or use any solvent to remove contamination.

To help restore the balance of natural oils and fats in the skin and help retain moisture and elasticity, a suitable restorer should be used at the end of each day following skin cleansing.

Look after your health – it is simple and it makes sense.

QUESTIONS – (there may be more than one correct answer)

		A	B	C
1	What type of skin damage can you suffer from?	Dermatitis	Numbness at the finger tips	Cancer
2	What type of substances should we be concerned about that can cause skin damage?	Oil-based	Chemicals	Paper products
3	Does the temperature of the water help clean the skin?	No	Yes – warm water	Yes – cold water
4	How do we know if PPE is to be worn when dealing with substances?	All jobs require the wearing of gloves	Through your training for the task - if in doubt, ask your supervisor	All jobs require the wearing of overalls
5	If you have a skin complaint, what should you do?	Nothing - see if it goes away	Tell your mate	Tell your supervisor straight away

