

SAVE YOUR SKIN! SAFE WORK DISTANCE!

Work-related dermatitis can be caused by **exposure to chemical agents** and **wet work**. Other agents causing work-related dermatitis can be biological (plants and/or bacteria), physical (vibration and/or radiation) and mechanical (abrasion). Hands are most at risk but other parts of the body can be affected too.

“Wet Work” is the term used to describe tasks in the workplace that **prolonged or frequent contact with water**, particularly in combination with soaps and detergents or chemicals. It means having hands repeatedly wet for long periods during the working day.



Safe Working Distance (SWD) [Please find this poster in attachment]



SWD is an essential approach to **reduce skin exposure in the workplace**. In many instances, when **hands are being used as tools**, they are frequently **immersed in chemicals and/or water**. This means there is no SWD.

The following Do's & Don'ts are crucial to prevent dermatitis in the workplace.



- ❌ **Immerse hands** in chemicals or allow prolonged repeated contact with water.
- ❌ **Chemical splashes** on the skin.
- ❌ Allow skin to come into **contact with contaminated work-pieces, surfaces, tools, clothing**, etc.



- ✅ **Know the health risks** associated with chemicals and products used in the workplace. Ensure the **labels** on the container are read.
- ✅ **Use tools and methods** which will **prevent skin contact** with hazardous substances.
- ✅ Use suitable protective gloves where necessary.
- ✅ Ensure that hands are washed and dried regularly, including before donning and after removing protective gloves.
- ✅ Seek medical advice if there are concerns about the condition of the skin.

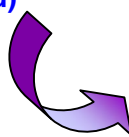
Look at the practicability and implement the principle described below to achieve SWD:-

1.	Eliminate	Eliminate the use of a hazardous substance or wet working.
2.	Substitution	Use less harmful substances.
3.	Engineering Control	Reduce/control the exposure by <u>automation</u> , complete enclosure of the process, local exhaust ventilation.
4.	Administrative Control	<u>Modify the process</u> to prevent/minimize the contact with hands by establishing and implementing <u>good working practices</u> .
5.	PPE	In situations where adequate control of skin exposure cannot be achieved by the above methods, provide suitable personal protective equipments. Remember, PPE always the last solution!

Types of skin diseases

The following skin diseases are often associated to skin exposure at the workplace.

- **contact dermatitis (most commonly occurred)**
- contact urticaria
- acne
- pigmentary disorders
- skin cancer



Dermatitis – signs and symptoms

The skin inflammation varies from mild irritation and redness to open sores, depending on the type of irritant exposed, the body part affected, and your sensitivity.

- Dryness
- Redness
- Itching
- Flaking/scaling
- Cracking/blistering
- Pain



Occupational dermatitis is a **non-infectious disease** caused by skin contact with substances used at work. There are 2 types of dermatitis including:

a) **Allergic** contact dermatitis

- Allergic contact dermatitis results when a person becomes sensitized to a substance (allergen). The person then develops an allergy to the substance and will react whenever in contact with that substance, no matter the duration of exposure.

b) **Irritant** contact dermatitis.

- Occurs when the skin is exposed to a mild irritant (eg: detergent or solvents) repeatedly over a long period of time or to a strong irritant (eg: acids, alkalis, solvents or cleansing compounds) that can cause immediate skin damage.

- Only the section of skin in contact with the substance will be affected.

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