



Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 04-0701

DON'T LET THEM GET UNDER YOUR SKIN

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

We frequently consider our skin as nothing more than a protective covering for our bodies. However, it is much more - it is the largest organ of the body. Like any organ various substances to which it may be exposed can affect it. Other than ingestion and inhalation, the skin is a major absorption route of entry into the body. External skin problems may be a warning of deeper problems.

Contact dermatitis is a common condition of the skin, and can account for over 75% of all skin injuries. Contact dermatitis is also the most preventable skin condition. Preventing harmful substances from contacting the skin is very important.

In addition to dermatitis, acidic and caustic chemicals can cause chemical burns. These can be severe. Solvents will remove the protective oils from the skin. Wearing the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), in accordance with the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), is the first step. Always remember:

- Gloves must be selected that are compatible with the chemical to prevent skin contact;
- Face shields must be used to prevent splash or spray exposures to the face and neck;
- Chemical resistant aprons are used to prevent clothing from being exposed to chemicals.

Always consult the MSDS for first aid response requirements and other important information on the specific chemical being used. Obviously, if your skin contacts any chemical, wash the area, in accordance with instruction in the MSDS. Any affected clothing and PPE should also be removed, prior to washing.

Some skin irritations are temporary and will go away shortly after contact with the skin is eliminated. However, depending on the person's length of exposure and reaction to the chemical, disorders can also be long term. In some cases a person may become "sensitized" (allergic) to specific chemicals. When this occurs, a minimal exposure can result in severe dermatitis. Some chemicals, such as solvents, pesticides and topical skin medications are frequently associated with this condition.

Once this allergic reaction occurs, there is no cure. Breathing vapors or other minute exposures of the chemical, may result in a recurrence of the familiar "rash-like" symptoms. The area around the eyes (eyelids) and face may be affected. Once severe dermatitis occurs, recovery can be slow and painful.

Chemical exposure can also result in skin cancer. Chemicals that cause cancer are known as carcinogens. Coal tar and excess radiation, a major component of the sun's rays (sun bathers beware), are commonly associated with skin cancer. When arc welding, long sleeves should be worn to protect the skin from harmful radiation that is produced during arc welding. Review the MSDS for potential cancer causing effects of chemicals.

One form of skin cancer is called "Chloracne". This is frequently associated with exposure to chlorinated hydrocarbons, contained in some solvents.

Early detection of, and treatment for, irritated skin is usually the key to maintaining healthy skin. Watch for the signs of dermatitis such as tingling, redness, swelling and itchiness. If you develop these symptoms, consult a dermatologist, a physician specializing in skin treatment.



SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: _____ MEETING DATE: _____

1. **Open Meeting & Present safety topic:** _____
2. Read minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. **Old Business** – Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.
5. **Accidents** – Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.
6. **Inspection Reports** – Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.
7. **New Business** – Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: _____ TIME FINISHED: _____

MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____ TITLE: _____