

PREVENTING OCCUPATIONAL SKIN DISEASE

CLEANERS ARE AT RISK

Workers that are regularly exposed to chemicals used for cleaning (e.g. detergents, degreasers, disinfectants, sanitizers, soaps, solvents) and/or water (e.g. frequent hand washing) are at risk of work-related skin disease.

PREVENTION TIPS FOR WORKPLACES

- **Examine your processes:** Is it possible to do things differently, without hazardous cleaning products or wet work?
- **Explore your options:** Could you replace hazardous cleaning products or wet work with less allergenic or irritant options (e.g. fragrance-free, preservative-free)?
- **Control the exposure:** Could strategies such as automated cleaning devices, increased ventilation (i.e. opening windows/doors after using cleaning products) or handles to prevent direct contact with cleaning solution (e.g. cloth soaked in cleaner) and treated surfaces help minimize workers' contact with hazardous substances?
- **Protect and train workers:** If the above strategies aren't possible, protect workers with personal protective equipment (e.g. long sleeves, nitrile gloves with cotton liner), skin care products (e.g. moisturizers, barrier creams), good washing facilities and training/instruction (e.g. hand washing, donning and removing gloves).
- **Make sure your prevention strategies are effective:** Regular skin checks can identify cases of dermatitis as early as possible and ensure that controls are working.

PREVENTION TIPS FOR WORKERS

- Get to know the health risks associated with the cleaning products you use by checking the Safety Data Sheets. Remember that water counts as a hazardous substance, and too much contact can cause skin disease.
- Follow manufacturers' directions (e.g. dilution ratio of cleaning solution to water).
- Avoid mixing products.
- Avoid coming into contact with any equipment, surfaces, tools, etc. that could be contaminated by hazardous substances (e.g. follow instructions for the proper removal of gloves).
- Try and work in a way to avoid chemicals splashing onto the skin.
- Avoid using abrasive hand cleaners on the skin.
- Ensure hands are washed and dried regularly, including before putting gloves on and after removing them.
- Use pre- and after-work creams to ensure good skin condition (but remember that pre-work creams are not a substitute for gloves).
- Check your skin regularly to see if you are developing skin irritation or a rash.
- Seek medical advice if you're concerned about your skin.