

# HEALTH & SAFETY NOTICE



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## SKIN MANAGEMENT

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## **SKIN MANAGEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1 This health and safety notice must be read and understood by all employees of Vacman Cleaning likely to be involved in work activities that bring them into contact with processes, products or substances that may have a damaging effect on their skin. Where applicable, it should also be read by all cleaners and Supervisors.
- 2 Vacman Cleaning Ltd recognises its responsibility to safeguard the safety health and welfare of its employees. This requires it to take all practicable measures to ensure that the conditions of work do not cause, exacerbate or contribute to damage to the skin or through penetration of the skin to damage of the internal organs of the body.
- 3 The purpose of this health and safety notice is to ensure that there are clearly defined safe working practices and adequate provision of the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and washing facilities in relation to skin care where needed. Detailed information on PPE is given in HSN 21.
- 4 It is the responsibility of all staff and students working with products or processes identified as potentially damaging to the skin to co-operate with the Company in relation to this health and safety notice. In particular this will include adherence to the agreed working practice, reporting any problems that arise from the working practices, correct use and care of PPE provided, maintenance of a high standard of personal hygiene and taking measures to avoid damage to the skin when away from the working environment.

### **STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

- 5 Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 1999 (COSHH) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1992 (MHSW) the Company must make an assessment of the risks to any staff liable to be exposed to a substance hazardous to health. In order to do this, the presence of any agents with known risks of skin damage needs to be assessed.

### **OCCUPATIONAL SKIN PROBLEMS**

6. Occupational skin diseases are primarily skin diseases, usually taking the form of contact dermatitis, caused by occupation. There are other forms of occupational skin disease that are not contact dermatitis. For example there could be infection from micro-organisms or a contact with a substance that may be carcinogenic. To cause an occupational skin disease, there must first be penetration of the surface layer of skin from a substance that provokes a reaction from the vulnerable skin beneath. Further definitions and information on common occupational skin diseases can be found in Appendix 1.

7. The aim of a skin care policy must be the elimination of contact between the skin and anything that will cause it or the body damage or disease. However in practice this is not usually possible. The practical aim must be to reduce contact with any substance to below the “no effect level” which is defined as contact with a substance for a duration and at a frequency and strength at which contact dermatitis or other damage to health will not occur in nearly all the population. This health and safety notice sets out the measures by which Vacman intends to achieve this aim.

### **SKIN RISK ASSESSMENT**

8. Under COSHH and MHSW Regulations Vacman must make an assessment of the risks to any workers liable to be exposed to a substance hazardous to health. The prime purpose of this risk assessment is to determine the measures required to prevent skin disease. The presence of any agents used in or given off by processes or activities with known risks of skin damage needs to be established. This can be achieved in a number of ways:
  - 8.1 Identify whether a substance is hazardous by referring to Appendix 2 that lists the more common substances known to be hazardous to health. Note: this list is a selection and is not exhaustive.
  - 8.2 Refer to suppliers labels and hazard data sheets for indication that substances are corrosive or harmful etc.
  - 8.3 Experience within the company may suggest a risk of skin damage from a particular substance or process
  - 8.4 Many occupations are known to carry a risk of skin damage. Examples are jobs where there is regular immersion of hands in liquids including water, skin contact with substances such as solvents, mechanical trauma from sharp particles or where plants and animals are handled.
  - 8.5 Where newly introduced substances are handled or existing substances are used in new ways and there is reason to suspect they may cause skin damage. In this case, the risk assessment should be revised.
9. An example skin risk assessment form can be found in Appendix 3 and may be reproduced for use by supervisors and other employees. Risk assessments and data sheets will be made available to any member of staff who requires them.

## **WORKING PRACTICE**

10. Relevant and appropriate working procedures must be established for all tasks and products suspected to be hazardous to the health of those working with them.
  - 10.1 In the first instance, wherever possible, contact with the hazardous substance should be avoided by eliminating it or replacing it with a safer alternative. Otherwise, control measures should be applied that minimise contact to the skin from the hazardous substance.
  - 10.2 Measures should be put in place to ensure controls are properly used and maintained, such as adequate and appropriate washing and drying facilities, appropriate skin care products and attention to personal hygiene such as the complete ban of food or drink in the areas where the substances are handled.
  - 10.3 PPE such as gloves and overalls should not be the first or only means of control considered. Any gloves used must be appropriate for the substance(s) being used and the level of protection provided by the glove must be considered. For advice and guidance on suitable PPE refer to manufacturer's data or contact the office for further advice. Adequate provision must be made for inspection, cleaning, maintenance, repair and replacement of any PPE provided.
  - 10.5 Safe methods of working with known toxic agents should be applied to unknown new chemicals in order to limit the effect on the skin that might otherwise be caused by an unconfirmed or unsuspected harmful contact.

## **HEALTH SURVEILLANCE**

11. Where necessary, exposure of workers to the substances used must be monitored and appropriate health surveillance undertaken to identify any adverse effects related to exposure so that steps can be taken to treat the condition and identify any need to reassess the risk of the substance being used and the control measures in place.
12. Any individual exposed to agents known to cause skin damage as identified by risk assessment should be referred to a Doctor for appropriate health surveillance and guidance. In addition to this, adequate and appropriate training should be given to all staff working with hazardous substances, (see Training below, paragraphs 13-14).

## **TRAINING AND INFORMATION**

13. Appropriate education and training must be provided to enable those using hazardous substances to comply with the health and safety measures in place. This training should include general education on the nature and risks to health of the substances being used and the precautions to be taken including self-examination of the skin for signs of skin disease, personal hygiene and skin care, training in safe working practices, the correct use and care of PPE and reporting procedures for any problems identified.
  
14. Training is available on request from the Managing Director.

Approved by:



.....  
(Managing Director)

Date:...../...../.....

## **Vacman- HSN 23 APPENDIX 1**

### **DEFINITIONS AND INFORMATION ON OCCUPATIONAL SKIN DISEASES**

#### Contact dermatitis

##### Definition

The commonest reaction of the skin to penetration of the barrier layer by a substance on its surface is an inflammation referred to as *eczema*. The main signs of this condition are redness, swelling, blistering, flaking and cracking of the skin. The main symptom is itching. The type of eczema caused by contact with substances is called contact dermatitis.

It is important to make an accurate diagnosis of this condition as non-contact dermatitis and other skin conditions such as ringworm or psoriasis can result in similar signs and symptoms.

#### Irritants and sensitisers

Substances capable of causing contact dermatitis can be divided into two groups, irritants and sensitisers (or allergens)

##### Definitions

Irritant: a skin irritant is a non-infective substance that can cause cell damage if applied to the skin for sufficient time and in sufficient concentration. Even water can become an irritant.

Sensitiser: a sensitiser or allergen is a substance that can cause an allergic contact dermatitis. Once the substance has penetrated the skin's outer protective layer, it sets off a chain of immunological events after which time further skin contact with the same sensitiser causes allergic contact dermatitis. There is a very wide individual variation in susceptibility to sensitisation among the human population that reflects the differences in allergic response to a particular substance.

Since there is not visual distinction between irritant and allergic contact dermatitis, it is important to refer anyone suffering with signs and symptoms of skin problems to accurately determine the cause. Other less common skin complaints can also have an occupational cause such as oil acne, contact urticaria (hives), ulceration and less commonly some skin cancers.

## Vacman- HSN -23 APPENDIX 2

### **SOME OCCUPATIONAL CONTACT IRRITANTS AND SENSITISERS**

These lists are not intended to be exhaustive. Many items can be both irritants and sensitisers (see *Appendix 1* for definitions). In the case of collective terms such as dusts it is not implied that all dusts are harmful to the skin.

#### **Specific chemicals or materials**

Acrylates	Fibreglass	Organic solvents
Ammonium persulphate	Flour	Organotin compounds
Asphalt	Formaldehyde	Paraffin
Azo dyes	Formaldehyde releasers	Permanent wave solutions
Brine	Formaldehyde resins	Phenols
Cement	Glutaraldehyde	Quinines
Chromates	Hydrazine	Rubber processing chemicals
Cobalt	Hydrofluoric acid	Shampoos
Chromates	Hypochlorites	Soluble oils
Cobalt	Isocyanates	Styrene
Colophony (rosin)	Kerosene	Synthetic coolants
Cresols	Lime	Talc
Cyanoacrylates	Methacrylates	Thinners
Dimethacrylates	Neal oils	White spirit
Epoxy resins and hardners	Nickel	

#### **Some broader groups of chemicals or materials**

Acids	
Adhesives	Fragrances, eg. Amethocaine
Alkalis	Local anaesthetics, eg. Amethociane
Animal feed additives, eg. Ethoxyquin	Oils and greases
Biocides, eg. Isothiazolinones	Oxidising agents, eg. Peroxides
Bleaches	Pesticides, eg. Difolatan
Degreasers	Polishes
Descalers	Preservatives
Detergents	Reducing agents, eg. Thioglycolates
Diesel fuels	Resins
Disinfectants	Sealants
Dusts, eg. Of angular or hygroscopic particles	Skin cleansers
Fertilisers	Soaps
Flavourings, eg. Eugenol	UV absorbers, eg. Aminobenzoates
Flour improvers, eg. Benzoyl peroxide	
Fluxes	

#### **Some biological agents**

Animal hair, saliva, tissues	Plants, eg. <i>Compositae (chrysanthemums)</i>
Aquatic organisms, eg. bryozoans	Woods, eg. mahogany
Food, eg. Fish, garlic	