

The Wrinkle

CONTACT DERMATITIS: The “Skin” Thing

Skin takes a beating in many workplaces. It gets knocked, scrapped and jabbed. It comes into contact with all kinds of harsh substances--- chemicals, heavy grease, oils, dirt and bacteria. The everyday activities of an industrial worker can compromise the skin’s system of renewal and protection, leaving the body vulnerable to infections and diseases.

Inflammation that occurs when an irritating substance comes into contact with the skin is known as contact dermatitis.

How serious a problem is contact dermatitis in the workplace? The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) believes that occupational skin diseases have been severely under-reported in the past and that the rate of new cases may be much higher than documented. NIOSH invested approximately three million dollars in contact dermatitis research during year 2000.

Contact dermatitis is one of the most common skin problems afflicting workers in industrial facilities. There are no formal government standards or guidelines relating specifically to skin protection in industrial settings, but NIOSH research indicates practices employers and workers can follow to help prevent contact dermatitis. Here are some recommended measures:

- Identify irritants and allergens in the workplace.
- Use effective engineering controls to eliminate or reduce contact with harmful substances.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment, such as gloves and protective clothing.
- Emphasize personal and occupational hygiene.
- Educate yourself to increase their awareness of irritants and allergens in the workplace.

DFA Employee Safety Newsletter

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Contact Dermatitis

Keeping skin healthy is important for us as employees. DFA employees want to stay safe and healthy, and DFA wants their workers on the job, not at home with an illness or injury. Dry, damaged, itchy or irritated skin is an all too common sight in many workplaces, and isn’t just unsightly; it can lead to accidents and infections. Employers can promote productivity by motivating their employees to increase the frequency and effectiveness of skin care, and by teaching proper hand washing techniques and providing skin care products that are effective and pleasant to use.

First Quarter Safety Award Winners

Congratulations to this quarter’s safety award winners. They will receive a certificate and a check for \$50. This is our way of recognizing our employees and to say “Keep up the good work”. Everyone benefits when we work safely. We are working hard to make sure that your workplaces are safe, but we need your help. We can’t be in 20 places at once but you can. We need you to partner with us in working safely and help us keep our worker’s compensation costs down. This year our worker’s comp costs skyrocketed from \$100,000 to \$250,000. We are asking you to do your part in reducing our costs by reporting to your supervisor any unsafe working conditions, whenever there is a near miss, and whenever you are injured on the job. The sooner we learn of an unsafe workplace condition, the sooner we can get it corrected. If everyone does a little bit, we can get ourselves back on track. Thanks for listening and helping out. Here are our winners:

Opal Croissant - Vallejo
Edward Cuccio - Yuba City
Jenny Johnson – Modesto
Linda Domingo – Stockton
Gurpreet Mukker – Fresno
Ruby Pence - Fresno

Safety Suggestion Contest

The new contest for the quarter is the safety slogan contest. This slogan will be plastered on all DFA payroll checks for the next twelve months. You can have an impact to remind our fellow employees that working safely pays. The prize is

dinner for two at any restaurant of your choice (excluding alcohol) hosted by someone from the DFA staff. Here are the rules:

1. The slogan cannot be longer than 31 characters including spaces.
2. The winner must not have been involved in a lost time accident in the past six months
3. DFA supervisors are eligible for this contest.
4. The slogan must be safety related and must convey the message about working safely.
5. Contest ends June 15, 2001 and prize must be claimed by July 1, 2001
6. Enter as many times as you would like but only one entry at a time
7. Enter by emailing slogan suggestion to thomasv@dfaofca.com or mail to the attention of Tom Vogel at the Sacramento office.

HEAT STRESS? ALREADY?

As we head into the warmer, sunnier months, we need to remember the dangers of heat stress. You can do yourself a favor by learning how to prevent, recognize, and treat the symptoms associated with heat illnesses. A little information

can go a long way to lessen lost time and unnecessary suffering.

Symptoms of heat stress can be as minor as a heat rash, but can progress to heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and finally heatstroke, which requires immediate medical attention. Some of the steps that can be taken to prevent heat stress are: wearing loose clothing, drinking plenty of water (before thirst sets in), doing hot jobs during cool parts of the day, and taking sufficient breaks.

QUESTIONS?

Call your supervisor or Tom Vogel in the Sacramento office.

First three right answers (If you haven't won in the last 90 days) get a pair of movie tickets to UA cinemas and a DFA mug. Send answers to thomasv@dfaofca.com or 916-561-5900 X104

Q: What is the biggest cause of accidents in the workplace?

- a. Unsafe acts
- b. Unsafe workplace conditions
- c. A mad supervisor
- d. The full moon
- e. Both A & B

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