

KEEPING IT HANDY

Industrial strength wipes aren't always made to simply remove dirt – some can protect your hands too, explains Corinna Palin, international marketing manager of Big Wipes.

According to the latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures available, there are more than 35,000 cases of work related skin diseases diagnosed by GPs every year in the UK. For many manual workers and cleaning professionals, hands are their livelihood and so cleaning them effectively while still being able to care for them is extremely important. Speedy removal of irritants is essential as skin disease on the hands can be debilitating and has serious implications when trying to continue with work.

Your skin is your body's largest organ and is its protective barrier. However, if harmful substances accumulate on your skin, that barrier can be broken and leave hands sore and inflamed, with the potential to cause long term health issues. Skin disease can be incapacitating for the sufferer, meaning that work becomes difficult and livelihoods are put in jeopardy.

There are common signs of skin problems to look for on your hands such as dryness, redness, cracking or swelling of the hands and fingers as well as blisters, flaking and itching.

Workers can develop these symptoms as they come into direct contact with substances commonly used on site.

If you are immersing your hands in liquids, or getting them splashed on a regular basis then your hands may suffer. Contact with contaminated tools or surfaces can also lead to harmful substances landing on the skin, causing a problem.



The HSE advises workers to use the 'APC' approach when it comes to looking after your hands, which stands for Avoid, Protect and Check.

Logically therefore, you should avoid direct contact between unprotected

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hands and substances, products and wet work where this is sensible and practical.

You should also protect the skin as avoiding contact will not always be possible, and check your hands for the first signs of itchy, dry or red skin.

When you're a construction worker or engineer for example, avoiding contact with filth can be impossible. Washing your hands is the most obvious way to get rid of potentially harmful substances but more often than not, there is no access to cleaning facilities.

Even when water and soap are readily available, they just won't shift the majority of modern construction and maintenance products.

For some people, gloves might be the answer. But for many jobs, gloves are simply not suitable, and for some workers, the gloves themselves can cause problems. Urticaria can be a reaction to gloves and can cause an almost immediate raised, itchy rash that can also cause tingling and burning. For those times when gloves cannot be used, again quick removal of the irritants is the only solution.

When choosing wipes look out for formulas that are preservative free and mainly water-based. Powerful cleaning agents such as Aloe Vera, Lanolin, Vitamin E and Glycerine all help to nourish and protect the skin.

Check also that they have been assessed to the latest EU Regulation 1223/2009 for cosmetic products with zero levels of irritation recorded during controlled testing by dermatologists and that they also offer >99.9% antibacterial protection for your skin.

The best wipes can be used without water and thus are perfect for on-site use where water isn't available.

Individuals who are concerned they may have a skin problem should always visit their GP for advice and treatment if needed. But, as the HSE advises, protection is an important step to preventing problems from occurring. Therefore wipes might well be the answer to protecting the most important tools of all – your hands.

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ISSUE: **OCTOBER 2015**

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KEEPING HOT HANDS COOL MAKING SWEATY HANDS DRY



ALUMINIUM FREE



The world's first glove
with ATG®'s integrated
ANTI-PERSPIRANT

Read more: **PAGE 15**

Image shows MaxiFlex® Ultimate™ 42-514
Patent Nr. EP 1609808