

The Manufacturers' Guide to **Safe and Healthy** Hands



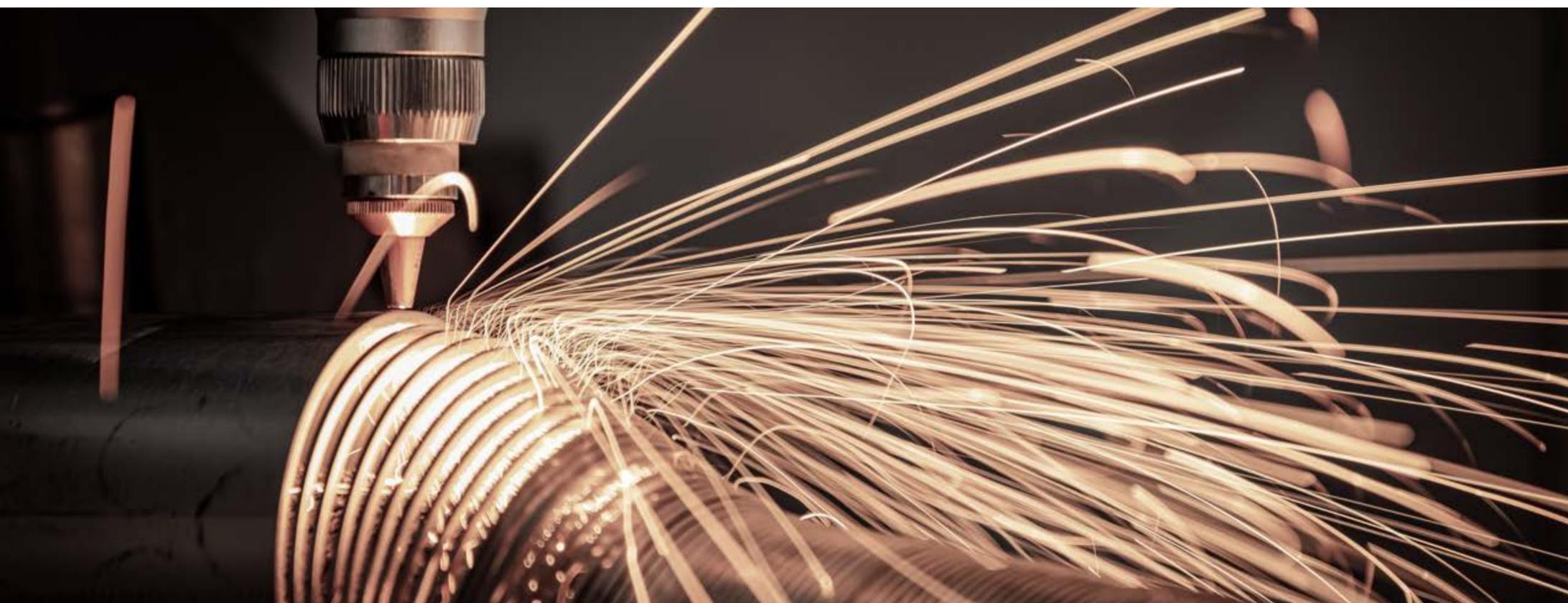
Hand safety is a **priority**

In manufacturing, workers' hands are as important and essential as any machine on the production line. However, too often skin safety, especially hand safety, is overlooked or taken for granted until a serious injury forces a manufacturer to review or establish skin safety-specific policies and procedures.

In the 2018 Summary of Occupational Incidents, the International Association of Drilling Contractors revealed that 29.47% of total industry lost-time incidents by body part involved fingers (20.26%) and hands/wrists (9.21%), and that 41.41% of total industry recordable incidents by body part involved fingers (31.12%) and hands/wrists (10.29%).¹

Potential hazards to hands and arms may include skin absorption of harmful substances, chemical or thermal burns, electrical dangers, bruises, abrasions, cuts, punctures, fractures or amputations.

Rather than waiting for an incident to occur to address skin and hand safety, manufacturers can take proactive measures to help ensure their employees remain healthy, protected and productive at work.



Skin care **surveillance**?

Manufacturers regularly conduct employee occupational health checks, such as lung function and hearing exams. However, examining their employees' skin, specifically their hands, may be a less common practice.

Skin care surveillance programs help manufacturers support employee health and assess the quality of their workplace resources. By equally emphasizing employee wellness and productivity, manufacturers can create opportunities to better determine the quality of their working environment and the effectiveness of their workforce.

What's the **risk**?

Skin-related injuries can carry more risk than some manufacturers realize. For example, occupational dermatitis, also known as eczema, poses a risk to employees. A skin disease caused by work and develops when the skin's barrier layer is damaged, it's one of the most widespread causes of ill health and affects workers in many industry sectors.

Commonly occurring on the skin on hands, forearms and face, occupational dermatitis can result in:

- redness
- itching
- swelling
- blistering
- flaking
- cracking

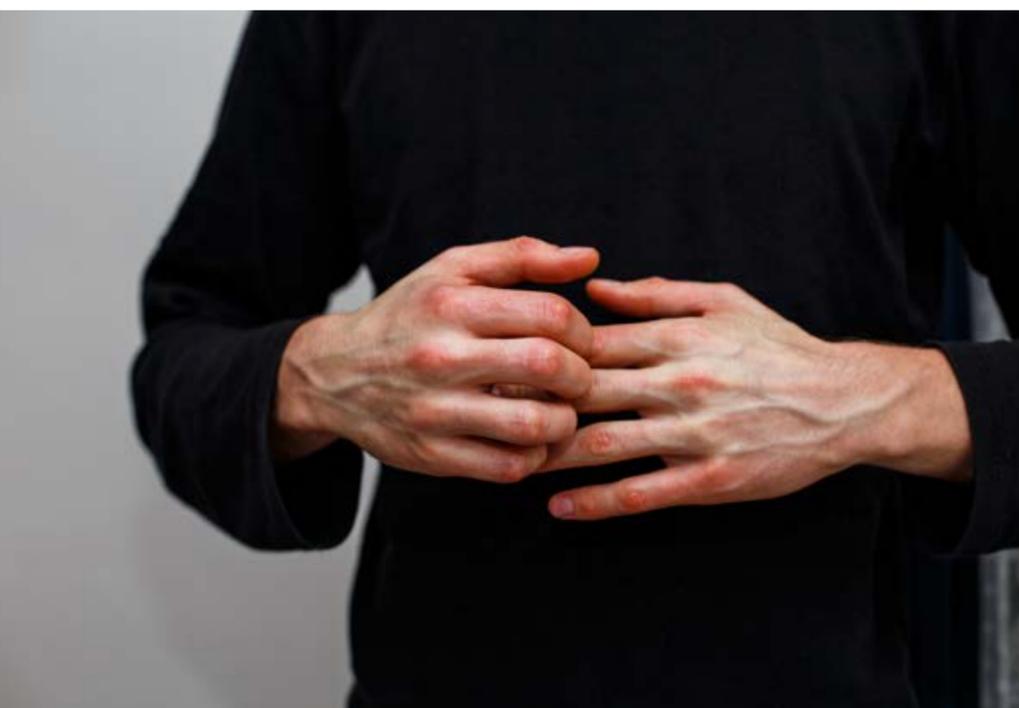
The effects of the disease can be severe enough to keep employees away from work or, in some cases, force them to change jobs. ^{2,3}



What is the **cause**?

There are various causes of occupational dermatitis in the workplace, such as:

- Prolonged contact with water, soaps and detergents
- Contact with foods, such as sugar, flour/dough, fruits, vegetables, spices, fish and meats
- Contact with coins (metals), rubber/latex gloves, chemicals and cleaners and some alcohol-based hand sanitizers/rubs⁴



What can be **done**?

As more manufacturers realize the impact that poor skin health can have on employee health and productivity, the greater the emphasis they will hopefully place on properly assessing this risk and establishing programs and protocols to mitigate the issue.

By doing so, manufacturers have the potential to create opportunities to identify skin-related health issues before they cause further harm to their employees and business.

Providing the **right tools** for the job

Ensuring employees have the right tools and equipment for their job is essential for their productivity and wellness. When it comes to skin health, specifically hand health, wearing appropriate, task-specific gloves can help improve hand safety and optimize productivity.

There are many variables to consider when identifying the right gloves for workers, but one of the most important factors is ensuring the gloves are specifically designed for the tasks they will be used to perform.

Similar to how mistakes can be made when the wrong tools are used on the production line, using the wrong gloves for certain tasks can potentially create opportunities for undesired outcomes.

For insight on how gloves are differentiated, let's compare features that are incorporated into their design to help employees handle specific manufacturing tasks.



Thickness	12 mil	6 mil	6 mil	6 mil	4.7 mil	3.5 mil	2.5 mil	2 mil
Chemical Protection	HIGHEST Hydraulic fluids, IPA, Frekote	MODERATE Chemical splash, citric acid, ethylene glycol					LOWEST Quick use, no chemical hazards	
Tactile Sensitivity	LOWEST		MODERATE				HIGHEST	
Durability	HIGHEST			MODERATE				LOWEST
Puncture Resistance	HIGHEST			MODERATE				LOWEST
Cost	HIGHEST			MODERATE				LOWEST

PRODUCT FEATURES

Fit for the workforce

Selecting the right gloves is critical, if not required, for many manufacturers. Well-fitting, task-specific gloves that are matched to the right workplace environment can help protect employees against injuries, cross-contamination, hazardous materials and more.

When identifying gloves for their employees, there are five elements manufacturers should consider:

1

Fit and comfort – To ensure correct sizing, manufacturers should inquire about gloves' features and the tasks they are designed to perform.



2

Chemical and biohazard protection – The type and material of gloves should be inspected to ensure they offer appropriate protection against hazardous material employees may encounter.

3

Tear and puncture protection – Per ASTM International requirements, nitrile gloves are recommended for strength and durability.



4

Dexterity and tactile sensitivity – Gloves with textured fingertips may give workers a better grip on wet and dry objects.

5

Allergy protection – Nitrile gloves aren't made with latex, making them an excellent choice for workers with latex allergies.



Balancing wellness and productivity

In manufacturing, there are some who believe that focusing on employee safety comes at the cost of losing operational efficiency and incurring additional costs. However, many organizations have proven this to be an attitudinal belief rather than a proven or measurable fact.

Focusing on improving employee safety has the potential to produce great benefits for an organization's workforce, operations and culture. Knowing their organization cares more about their wellbeing than profits can help keep employees motivated and inspired to work effectively.



A long-term study found that businesses with good cultures grew revenue by 4X or 682 percent.⁵

Specifically, regarding skin safety, knowing that their organization takes all injuries seriously, employees can feel confident that the right programs are in place to protect their bodies from head to toe and, perhaps most importantly, their livelihood.

The number of on-site workers who agree that their company is committed to their health and safety doubles to 87% among employees who believe senior leaders listen to and care about their concerns.⁶

Ultimately, for manufacturers, investing in skin care safety isn't just the responsible thing to do for their employees, it's essential to protecting their business and financial bottom line.

Get your **guard** on with KleenGuard™ human centric PPE.

[Learn more about KleenGuard™](#)

About Kimberly-Clark Professional

Kimberly-Clark Professional partners with businesses to create Exceptional Workplaces, helping to make them healthier, safer and more productive. Key brands in this segment include Kleenex, Scott, WypAll, KleenGuard and Kimtech.

References

- 1 2018 Summary of Occupational Incidents, the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC), [2018-Annual-Report-for-Industry-Totals.pdf](#)

- 2, 4 Dermatitis, Health and Safety Executive, [Web Article](#)

- 3 Work related contact dermatitis, Health and Safety Executive, [Web Article](#)

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- 6 COVID-19 Insights Research: What Employees Need From Leaders Now, [Web Article](#)
