

Skin hazards—Allergic contact dermatitis (ACD)

List ACD hazards on site.

Explain dangers

Some materials you use at work can cause a non-infectious skin disease called “dermatitis”. There are two types of dermatitis:

- 1. Allergic contact dermatitis (ACD)**
- 2. Irritant contact dermatitis (ICD).**

After prolonged or repeated skin contact with some materials, you may become “sensitized”. Your skin will break out and become red, dry, itchy with blisters, and swollen.

Once sensitized, your body will not tolerate contact with the material, even when touching small amounts. Sensitization usually lasts a lifetime, meaning you may never be able to work with the material again.

Common causes of ACD on the jobsite include

- Organic solvents in paints
- Epoxy resins (especially the hardener)
- Coal tar
- Chromium in wet concrete
- Formaldehyde
- Natural rubber latex.

You can be at risk of developing ACD from substances that

- Land on your clothes and seep through to your skin
- Fall into your boots and stay there
- Land on your skin and mix with sweat
- Rub against your skin in tight spots such as under your wrist watch
- Splash and land onto your face and neck.

Identify controls

- Know the skin hazards on the jobsite. Read the label or safety data sheet (SDS) for a controlled product before using it. Look for phrases such as “skin sensitization” or “skin irritant”.
- Use gloves and other protective equipment specific to the hazard (consult the SDS).
- Avoid activities that may degrade your skin and increase the risk of sensitization.
- Avoid excessive hand washing and don’t work with wet hands.
- Use mild soaps when washing your hands. Don’t use solvents.
- Apply hand cream to prevent your skin from drying out.
- Inspect your clothing throughout the shift for contamination, in particular your knees, forearms and boots. If contaminated, change into dry clothing and wash the affected area.
- If working with wet concrete, tape the top of your boots to your pants, and tape your gloves to your wrists to prevent contact.

Demonstrate

Show workers the proper types of gloves to use and how to prevent materials from contacting their skin or getting trapped in clothing.



Source: Health and Safety Executive