

Wash Your Hands

We assume everyone knows how to wash their hands, but many workers don't realize how important hand washing and skin care can be in the prevention of disease. Proper skin care and hand protection help keep workers productive and on the job.

The best defense against the spread of illness or skin ailments is to prevent them where possible by washing hands often. Irritating contaminants should be avoided if possible; the second line of defense is gloves; and barrier creams the third. If gloves are worn, clean or replace them frequently to make sure they don't collect or absorb irritants. Check gloves often for wear, cuts or pinholes. Be sure the gloves you choose are the proper type and material to protect against the specific chemical or situation you'll encounter. The use of Protective Skin Creams either under gloves or alone will provide a protective environment to the skin. Protective Creams help prevent harmful irritants from penetrating the skin and entering the blood stream. Also, they help prevent soilings from adhering to the skin, allowing for quicker wash-up and more effective soil removal. Practicing personal hygiene, especially regular hand washing, helps prevent:

- **Ingestion and absorption of harmful substances**
- **Spread of infection and diseases**
- **Occupational skin disease**
- **Absenteeism due to illness**
- **Lost work time**

There are many things employers can do to help workers improve attention to skin care and understand the importance of regular hand washing. For example:

- Include personal hygiene and skin care in the employee orientation program and in regular safety training. Videos, education booklets and in servicing are available from Deb.
- Maintain an ongoing awareness program to remind workers of the importance of proper skin care. Posters and pamphlets are excellent vehicles for generating awareness about personal hygiene throughout the year.