



Command *Safety* Gram



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Dressing for Safety

You are probably accustomed to seeing surgeons, laboratory technicians, firefighters, or emergency responders wearing protective clothing. But what about you? How can you defend yourself against the hazards of your job? Protective clothing ranges from simple coveralls to shield your clothing from dirt, to a full body "moon suit" to guard against hazardous substances.



There are many options available to you. Here are a few examples.

- ◆ Coveralls provide light duty protection from dust, paint spray or grease. They can be made from a variety of materials including a cotton fabric or disposable cloth-like paper.
- ◆ Disposable shirts, pants, lab coats, hair protectors, boots, and aprons are also available in lightweight synthetic fibers. They are commonly used in "clean room" operations involving sensitive electronic equipment, the manufacture of medical implant devices or pharmaceuticals, or the production and packaging of consumable food products.
- ◆ Specially treated cotton and heavy wool garments are generally comfortable to wear and flame-resistant. These garments adapt well to changing work temperatures.
- ◆ Aprons of padded leather, hard fibers, or metal provide some protection from blows, cuts, and bruising.
- ◆ Leather clothing can provide protection against hot metal splashes and heat. Welders frequently wear this type of clothing.
- ◆ Rubber, rubberized fabrics, and some types of plastics give protection against certain acids and chemicals.
- ◆ Aluminized clothing can protect against the extremely high temperatures involved in smelting operations or fire-fighting.
- ◆ Extremely toxic substances may require an encapsulating suit with a self-contained compressed air respirator. Workers using hazardous chemicals, or removing toxic wastes would probably use this type of protective clothing.
- ◆ Gloves, sleeves, aprons, and blankets made of heat and cut resistant materials are available. This protective equipment is available in varying weights and sizes.

Other types of clothing designed for special job hazards may include:

To be effective, protective clothing should be cleaned and inspected regularly. Rips, tears or other damage should be immediately reported to your supervisor.

- ◆ High visibility reflective clothing for night work.
- ◆ Personal flotation devices when working near or on water.
- ◆ Lead-lined clothing for working around x-ray machines.

If you are washing your protective clothing at home, remember these points:

- ◆ Clean protective clothing regularly and according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ◆ Keep it separate from regular laundry.
- ◆ Use plenty of hot water and a heavy-duty detergent to wash your protective clothing.
- ◆ Wash heavily soiled clothing twice if necessary.
- ◆ Dry the clothing completely before wearing.
- ◆ Be careful not to bring contaminated clothing into your home.

Protective clothing can safeguard your health against a variety of hazards. Ask your supervisor for assistance when choosing the proper protection for your job.

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