



# Shop Safety Tips

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## Dermatitis

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Dermatitis is an inflammation of the skin from any cause. Most wood workers working in the shop that work with chemicals are exposed to some form of skin irritant. Irritation may vary from slight reddening with mild itching to a rash with intense itching. In severe cases, there may be open sores, with or without swelling.

There are four causes of dermatitis:

1. **Primary irritants:** A primary irritant is one that will cause damage or dermatitis on contact of anyone's skin if sufficient time is allowed.
2. **Allergic sensitizers:** Allergic sensitizers do not affect everyone's skin, only those who have developed an allergy to the particular chemical. For example developing a latex allergy
3. **Photosensitizers:** Photosensitizers are chemicals that only affect the skin in the presence of light -- usually ultraviolet light.
4. **Mechanical trauma:** An example of a mechanical cause of dermatitis is glass fiber. The particles stick in the skin causing an irresistible itch.

The best way of controlling dermatitis is to prevent skin contact with irritants. Wear protective gloves when working with finishes or chemicals as well as clothing that covers your exposed arms or body.

Other preventative measures that will protect against most skin irritants in the shop are:

- Frequent hand washing is a successful preventive measure
- The use of large quantities of water on the skin following exposure to irritants is necessary.
- Use barrier creams especially formulated for the chemical used in the shop.

