

Lesson Learned Briefing

No.: LL08-0013

Title: Chemically Resistant Gloves and Latex Allergies

Category: ES&H - Chemical Hygiene



Lesson Learned Statement:

A Lab employee developed a rash on her left hand and sought medical attention. There was no suspected chemical exposure and no clear causal factor other than a possible allergy from the latex gloves she was wearing.

Some people are allergic to latex and/or its components. This includes the natural rubber proteins in latex, glove powder, used for absorbing perspiration or other chemical constituents added to the material during the manufacturing process. Reactions can be mild to severe, depending on the individual.

If you think you may be allergic to latex or its constituents, then use gloves made of a different material.

Discussion:

Gloves come in a variety of materials. In addition to latex, gloves are available nitrile, neoprene, butyl rubber and PVC to name a few. They come in different lengths and thicknesses as well. Several factors must be considered in selecting gloves for protection against chemicals. These include: chemical resistance to the material(s) being handled, resistance to wear and tear, the need for manual dexterity and the individual's sensitivity to the actual glove material. But remember, the reason why gloves are used is to provide protection against the chemicals. There is no single glove that is resistant to all chemicals. So thought and care must be put into glove selection. Make sure you consult the Chemical Hygiene and Safety Plan (<http://www.lbl.gov/ehs/chsp/html/materials.shtml#Gloves>). It has a lot of useful information about glove types, selection and chemical resistance. And most importantly, it has selection guides so you can choose the right glove that will offer protection against the chemical(s) you handle. Contact Larry McLouth the Laboratory's Chemical Hygiene and Safety Program Manager via email (ldmclouth@lbl.gov) or by phone (486-5286) for questions about chemically resistant gloves.