

DICKIES PROVIDE SAFETY WORKWEAR

Dickies launched a brand new Flame Retardant (FR) range for 2014 with safety being the driving force behind it with exciting new design features and introducing new and innovative fabrics into the market.



Jim Hanna, Dickies International Business Development Manager takes a look at health and safety within hazardous areas.

"A responsible employer has to ensure ongoing review and standardisation of their Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) so the fit and use of the equipment along with the protection levels afforded by it are consistent and appropriate. Remember that just because an item of PPE passes the relevant EN standard it does not mean that all PPE items with that standard meet the exact same levels of protection. EN standards are intended to ensure that articles offered for use meet the minimum criteria required it does not mean they all achieve the same standard of protection. Two items with identical EN markings will both pass the minimum criteria but not necessarily perform to the same standard of protection.

"Risk Assessments should be conducted and reviewed in the work place regularly to ensure what is required to provide adequate protection for the worker. Sometimes there will be a conflict in selecting the correct PPE, for example a heavy weight coverall may afford more protection than a lighter weight coverall in some circumstances but if the worker is working in a very hot and uncomfortable environment the heavier weight

garment may be uncomfortable and lead to heat stress and/or an increase in body temperature which results in declining concentration levels. A lighter weight but technically superior coverall may be the ideal solution even though on paper they all meet the same EN standard.

"Fit and comfort are paramount as PPE that does not fit correctly is not only a potential cause of an accident but may not provide adequate protection should it be required. Some PPE manufacturers reduce costs by offering a range of products with less fit options thereby a worker may be compromised on his or her safety by having to use a size up or a size down because their ideal size in the PPE range selected is not available. If costs are a deciding factor (which inevitably it will play a part but hopefully a very small one at the end of the selection process) then consider are all the EN standards the PPE product offers are relevant or even required. Some products offer less EN standards not because they are compromising safety but rather they are perhaps more focused and therefore more suitable."

"Educate your workforce in the correct way to fit and wear PPE. I have seen many examples over the years of PPE being compromised because of wearers not wearing the item correctly. In this day and age it is not unusual to have multi ethnicities on site all with differing shape and size requirements. Ear plugs inserted incorrectly or eyewear that does not fit over the bridge of the nose correctly and as a consequence eyewear keeps sliding down or sits too high allowing possible ingress and injury to occur from a large unprotected area over or under the eye. FR coveralls are my favourite topic and although it is tempting to unzip a coverall during warm weather conditions it seriously reduces the protection the coverall is designed to offer by increasing susceptibility of the wearer's vital organs and



oesophagus in the event of a flashover or electric arc incident. These are precisely the areas you need protecting to improve your survivability let alone the increase in body burns and associated risks that an open FR coverall presents.

"The most important piece of advice is to listen to the employee. They are the individuals who have to wear PPE day in day out. If there is something they don't like then do not dismiss it. They can provide both the employer and the PPE manufacturer valuable feedback which can perhaps be easily remedied or be considered in future developments and designs. A responsible PPE manufacturer is always ready and willing to provide assistance via their technical experts. If employees are uncomfortable with some aspect they will either not wear it correctly or attempt to wear something that simply isn't fit for their particular individual needs rendering it ineffective. Having PPE compliance as a key performance indicator in your business is essential in helping you measure its suitability but more importantly because it makes PPE a focus and achieving feedback on its appropriateness is vital."

For more information on Dickies health and safety workwear, visit:
www.dickiesworkwear.com.