

KLINE'S

auto inc.

SAFE USE OF UV-CURED PRIMER SURFACERS

A few years ago, UV cure primer-surfacers were introduced to the collision industry. These products use UV light to initiate cross-linking of molecules in specially formulated primer-surfacers. The coatings fully cure in about two minutes.

How do you handle UV-curing materials and safely work with equipment used in the curing process? UV-cured coatings have relatively low toxicity levels, and UV lamps can be considered rather safe compared to some other tools found in a collision repair facility. But if safety equipment is not properly used and/or safety precautions are not followed, direct contact with the materials or the UV light can cause skin and eye irritations. Prolonged exposure may develop into more serious reactions.

Clothing/Safety Equipment
When working with UV-cure primer-surfacers, proper protective clothing should be worn. Safety glasses, nitrile gloves, and long sleeved shirts and pants reduce the chance for direct contact with the skin. If accidental contact does occur, immediately wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. Cleaning solvents should not be used on the skin as this could increase the

chance that the chemical may penetrate the skin, which would cause further or more severe irritation.

Symptoms of exposure do not occur immediately, so it is important to be aware of incidental contact and to wash the chemical off the skin as soon as possible. Prolonged exposure may cause blistering of the skin. The technician may also develop an allergy to the product. A technician that becomes sensitized can no longer safely work with the material or in areas where the chemical is used. If eye contact occurs, flush the eyes immediately with large amounts of warm water and contact a physician. A fully cured UV coating is less hazardous than the uncured raw material but it only cures under direct UV light. Any spills, equipment, or contaminated clothing should be cleaned or disposed of properly. As with all chemicals in the repair facility, refer to the supplier's material safety data sheet (MSDS) for information on potential hazards and safety concerns.

UV Light Hazards

The UV light from the curing lamp is another potential hazard. It is well known that UV light radiated from the sun can cause sunburn. UV light can affect our eyes as well. Always wear UV-rated safety glasses when work-

ing in an area where a UV-curing lamp is being used. Tinted glasses do not always provide protection against UV rays. Be certain of the lenses' ability to protect against UV rays, by looking for a manufacturer statement saying the lenses are rated for UV protection.

If working directly in front of the light cannot be avoided, be sure to cover all areas of the skin as well. Use any shielding that comes with the curing lamp to reduce reflecting light from other areas of the workplace. Symptoms of overexposure to UV light are not immediate and the user may not be aware of the hazard until the damage is already done.

Using UV-cure primer-surfacers may improve the efficiency of some repairs. However, in order to maintain a safe work environment, technicians need to be informed of potential hazards and safe handling procedures. By using the proper safety equipment such as nitrile gloves and UV-absorbing safety glasses, exposure to skin-irritating chemicals and UV rays is greatly reduced.

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