

# Services to Union Members

## Personal Injury

### Dermatitis

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Every year thousands of people contract illness and disease as a direct result of exposure to harmful substances at work. One of the most widespread work-related skin diseases is dermatitis, which can have serious consequences for the individual concerned. If the condition is permanent, it can make carrying out your job impossible.

If you have contracted dermatitis as a result of exposure to substances at work, or your workplace has exacerbated an existing condition, you may have a claim for compensation. Dermatitis may arise in any industry where workers come into contact with oils, dyes, coolants, cleaning products or chemicals.

#### What is dermatitis?

Dermatitis (commonly known as eczema) is an inflammation of the skin and can be used as a term to describe different skin conditions.

#### Irritant contact dermatitis

This is caused by exposure to a substance which irritates the skin over a short period of time or from prolonged exposure to small amounts of the same substance. The reaction is caused by an irritant such as acid, soap, cleaning product or glue. This is the most common form of dermatitis and normally results in an outbreak or eruption of the skin including redness, itchiness and blistering. In severe cases the condition can spread all over the body. The condition will generally improve if the person stops being exposed to the irritant.

#### Allergic dermatitis

This form of dermatitis results when an individual becomes hypersensitive or allergic to a particular substance they have been exposed to, such as latex, cosmetics, glues or fragrances. It may be that the substance caused no allergic reaction at first, but that prolonged exposure has resulted in redness or even open sores. This can affect the whole body, not just the skin that has been in contact with it.

#### Do I have a case for compensation?

Your employer has a responsibility to protect you adequately from illness or disease at work. If you are working with hazardous substances, they must be aware of any harm these may cause you - and train and equip you accordingly. They should provide you with protective clothing to prevent the substance from coming into contact with your skin. If you have developed dermatitis at work due to circumstances that were not your fault, you could have a claim.

Our team are experienced and knowledgeable about this specialised area of law. Our Lawyers will handle your case sensitively, focusing on your individual circumstances. Should you decide to proceed with legal action, we will be here for you from start to finish - keeping you fully aware of all developments as the case progresses.

#### How to claim

All our personal injuries services are free to Union Members. To make a claim, please contact your Trade Union Representative in the first instance. They will then put you in touch with us.

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