



## Twelve Tips on Donning & Wearing to help ensure Safety Clothing Protects as it should



During every pandemic or potential pandemic crisis that makes the global news – whether Ebola, SARS or Covid-19 - we become used to seeing protective clothing pictured or filmed in the news media. For those of us closely involved in the protective clothing industry it can be frustrating - it is too often apparent that many such images are examples of how NOT to wear safety clothing if you want it to actually protect as it is designed to. So how do you ensure workers wear safety clothing properly and minimise the risks of protection being compromised?

An example of how not to wear safety clothing is provided by the image below – of a worker in Ukraine disinfecting the contaminated interior of a bus where not only is the face mask not covering the nose, the coverall zip is left partially open leaving several inches of neck exposed. The fact is, if there is a pathogen hazard present, this

worker is risking contamination by not wearing the PPE properly.

And this is not unusual or restricted to medical applications or to protective clothing used for viral protection; those of us regularly visiting factories around the world are used to seeing safety clothing worn in a way that means it will not protect as it should.

### How can you ensure safety clothing is worn correctly?

Disposable protective clothing is designed, manufactured and worn for a reason: to protect against hazards. And those hazards may have a devastating effect on a wearers' life – or even end it. So the process of donning protective clothing and making sure it is worn correctly is not a minor issue. Selecting the right safety clothing is only

one part of the protective process. Wearing it properly is at least as important.

There is no guarantee of course; but by establishing proper donning procedures and effective and regularly reinforced training the risk can be minimised

**With five decades experience working with users to design and manufacture safety clothing for protection against chemicals and pathogenic hazards Lakeland are well versed in the wearing of suits as well as in the making of them. So to avoid the faults seen in the image here and to maximise protection and minimise the risk of contamination, overleaf are twelve tips on donning and wearing disposable protective clothing.**



The image here - of a worker in Ukraine disinfecting the interior of a bus - appeared as part of the media coverage of the Covid-19 global health crisis.

Of the PPE in use two items are worn incorrectly. The mask is not covering the nose and the coverall zipper is partially unzipped.

*This worker is exposed and risks contamination*



## Twelve Tips on donning protective clothing to Maximise Protection and Minimise Risk

### 1. Understand the hazard

Ensure workers understand the hazard they are protecting against. Many chemical and viral hazards are unseen. Unless they understand the consequences of contamination they may under-estimate the danger and not pay attention to detail.

### 2. Establish a written donning procedure

Not all protective clothing and donning processes are the same; we recommend establishing a written donning (and doffing) process to ensure important and possibly unique issues are addressed. That way workers get to understand those issues and deal with them. And have the process visibly available in the donning area. Ensure training is given to those involved in

### 3. Train and Review

wearing and donning safety clothing and that the process is regularly reviewed and updated if necessary – especially if the clothing is changed to a different type or brand.

They often contain important information

### 4. Read User Instructions Properly

about the suit and include limitations of use that might be critical. For example, some “Type 3” chemical suits are actually only Type 3 in certain circumstances – such as when additional taping of the zip cover is applied.

### 5. Work in pairs... ideally the same pair each time

Some parts of donning are best done by a partner – such as final fastening of the zip and storm flap. And only a partner can conduct a final visual check of the the donned garment to ensure there are no damages or tears, that seams are intact and that all fastenings are done up correctly.

And a regular partner will learn the errors you sometimes make and ensure they are addressed

### 6. Conduct a visual inspection of the garment before donning

Better to discover any damage or faults before donning rather than discover them once you are wearing it – or worse, when you are in a critical area. Ideally lay the suit on a smooth flat surface and inspect front

and back checking seams and closures are functional

### 7. Sit down for donning.

To insert feet into the legs of a coverall sit down and remove shoes or boots. Trying to do this whilst standing and whilst wearing boots is more likely to result in damage to the coverall and you risk falling over and damaging yourself.

### 8. Fully fasten zips and closures

The zip on a coverall extends fully to the neck for a reason. If it was intended to fasten 6 inches below the neck it would end there. If you leave it partially open, you leave open an easy route for contamination

### 9. If the zip cover is seal-able... seal it.

The most common route for ingress of particles or droplets in the atmosphere is through the zip teeth and backing materials which is normally woven. For this reason Type 4 and above coveralls normally feature a method of sealing over the zip. So use it.

### 10. Do you need to seal the coverall joins with other PPE such as masks or gloves?

The most likely route for ingress of contamination if it cannot penetrate through the clothing is to go through the joins between the clothing and other PPE. In higher hazard applications you may need to consider sealing these joins with a good quality barrier tape or using a glove connection system such as **push-lock®**

### 11. Conduct Final Visual Inspection

The final stage before entering any critical area should be a thorough visual inspection by your partner or buddy to identify any damage or faults and to ensure all closures are fastened fully and properly.

### 12. Do not adjust in a critical area

Clothing should never be removed, partially unfastened – even temporarily for adjustment – in a critical area where contamination could occur. Training in the hazard and clothing, and considering the use of more comfortable options, such as **Cool Suits** will reduce the likelihood of this.

The use of protective clothing to guard against contamination by hazardous dusts, liquids or pathogenic contaminants does not remove risk and does not guarantee protection. Wearing any PPE can only reduce or minimise the risk of contamination. Such clothing is designed to protect and if not worn correctly will not do so properly. By not wearing PPE correctly users increase the risk and the consequences could be dire. The twelve tips listed here can help mitigate that risk more effectively

**Protective clothing not worn properly will not protect properly.**

**A proper donning process is part of minimising risk**

