

Donning and Doffing Do's and Don'ts



 Throughout this document click where indicated for additional information!

Donning is a vital part of wearing a chemical suit. A suit not donned properly may not protect properly. The best chemical suit in the world may be undermined if not worn as it should be.

Meanwhile, doffing is a hazardous process because the outside of the suit may be contaminated

The details of your specific donning and doffing process will relate to your particular choice of garment, the application, and the environment. However, the points listed here cover general do's and don'ts that apply to all donning and doffing processes and will help ensure protection is maximised and risk minimised.

Preparation

DO start with a risk analysis of the donning and doffing process. This should highlight the dangers involved and key issues to address.

Start with the chemical itself: How toxic and dangerous is it? What are the consequences of contamination, and will contamination even be noticed?



DO undertake donning and doffing in a clean, dry, spacious area if possible. If the donning area is dirty and restricted, damage is more likely to occur.

DO read chemical safety clothing user instructions carefully. User instructions often contain key information and LIMITATIONS OF USE that you need to be aware of.



DO consider using the facilities before donning the suit. It might seem obvious, but you don't want to decide you need to AFTER you've donned the suit.



Donning



DO work in pairs for both donning and doffing. Much of the donning and most of the doffing process can only be done effectively and safely by your partner.



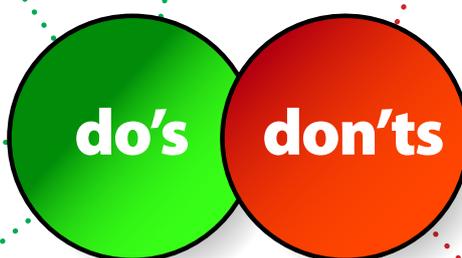
DO conduct a thorough examination of the suit before donning. If the suit has been damaged in transit or during storage, you want to know BEFORE you put it on.
NEVER use a garment which is damaged, worn or has non-functional components



DON'T try to do the initial part of donning whilst standing and wearing footwear. Inserting booted feet into the legs of the garment whilst standing can result in losing balance and is more likely to damage the garment.



DO stand for the final stages of the process. The later stages of donning can only be effectively done when standing.



DON'T underestimate the importance of joints between different items of PPE, whether they require sealing, and how to achieve an effective seal if so.

It is good practice to wear a disposable nitrile glove underneath the chemical gloves. This serves as additional protection and helps protect the hands during doffing.



DO consider a logical order of donning the full PPE ensemble. The order with which items of PPE are donned, such as coverall, gloves, mask, boots and so on, will relate to the type and design of each. Make sure you establish the most logical, effective order for donning.

For example, should the face mask straps go inside or outside the hood? The decision affects the order of donning.



DO conduct a final visual check of the garment before entering a critical area. Only your partner will be able to spot any damage to the suit that has occurred during donning or whether all closures and seals are as they should be.



DON'T try to apply sealing tape to joints yourself... you won't do a good job!

An alternative to taping joints between gloves and sleeves is to use a connection system such as Lakeland's Push-Lock glove connection (shown above). This offers a simple and quick liquid-tight seal, providing greater security for the wearer.



Doffing



DO determine a logical order for removal of the PPE ensemble.

Consider, given the possibility of contamination, the most effective and safe method and order of removal. This may be:

- Removal of any tape
- Partial coverall unzipping and removal of mask and hood
- Full unzipping
- Peeling the garment down the body from the rear, removing gloves with the coverall, and turning the whole ensemble inside out so any contamination is on the inside
- Removal of legs and boots while sitting

The detail will depend on the specific design of PPE.



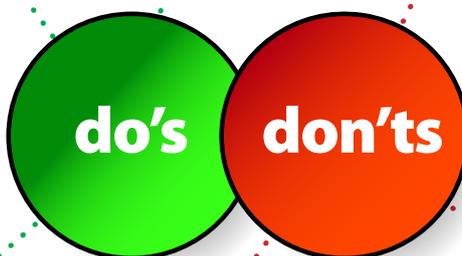
DO assess whether the garment is contaminated before doffing. A contaminated garment means doffing is a hazardous process

Consider if the garment should be cleaned and / or decontaminated before doffing.

Bear in mind chemicals may have permeated into the molecular structure of the fabric, making removal difficult.



DON'T forget to consider the nature of the chemical: if the suit IS contaminated, will it be obvious? Contamination of some chemicals may not be easily apparent, so take more care where it is not easily noticeable.



DO have a suitable bag immediately available for disposal.



DON'T remove gloves before doffing a contaminated coverall! Removing gloves means hands are exposed to any contamination on the coverall as it is removed.

Remove gloves at the final stage and place inside the garment bundle.



DON'T forget the partner assisting doffing may also need PPE! If the garment is contaminated, the assistant will also need PPE. This may simply be a pair of gloves, but depending on the level of contamination and hazard presented by the coverall, may extend to full body protection.



DON'T try to stand for the final part of doffing.

Like with donning, trying to remove feet from the garment legs whilst standing is unwise.

General Principles



DO produce a written donning and doffing process and checklist. A written process and checklist made easily available in the donning and doffing area can be referenced by users and enables checking to ensure it is being followed properly.

DO review the donning and doffing process periodically.

Regular reviewing of the process, especially if PPE changes, helps ensure it keeps pace with best practice and that it remains effective and safe.



Do consider the impact on the doffing process if garments are to be re-used.

In most cases chemical suits are disposed of after a single use.

However, if garments are to be re-used the doffing process will need to be adjusted with this in mind.



DON'T just assume wearers will know how to don and doff properly. Establish training programs to ensure users know the correct donning and doffing process. Refresh and review training regularly, and ensure any new staff are appropriately trained.

DON'T take risks!

Perhaps the most dangerous words in the safety industry are "It'll be OK". A chemical suit not worn properly will not protect properly and, when you are dealing with "killer chemicals", it might not be.

Never underestimate the importance of a well-considered and written donning and doffing procedure.

It can help ensure protection against hazardous chemicals is as it should be at all times, and that the dangers inherent in doffing are minimised.

NOTE: These pages can contribute to effective donning and doffing procedures. However, it does not alone constitute a guarantee of protection as other requirements not stated here may be important in your own process.



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