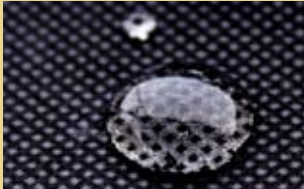




IN BRIEF



pic: stock.xchng

Nano alert

There's growing concern about the widespread use carbon nano-tube technology in mouldings for road vehicles and aircraft. "Carbon based nano particles are dispersed when these products combust," says Peter Marshall. "These particles have been found to cause mesothelioma in laboratory animals."



Prefab sticker

In the US, Derby (Connecticut) is looking at a by-law requiring reflective warning stickers be fixed to buildings containing prefabricated engineered lumber. Local alderman and firefighter David Lenart says in an emergency, the stickers would be a warning to firefighters.



pic: stock.xchng

Smart skin

A European project is working on a 'second skin' for firefighters. The goal is 'smart' ppe containing sensors, health monitors GPS and wireless communications to monitor a firefighter's location, physical condition and any toxic hazards.

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Lower OHS standards across Australia are not on says the UFUA pic: warren frey

Protection progress

The vested interests are powerful but firefighters are making headway in talks to establish safe ISO ppc/ppe standards

Mark Gribble, the Union's representative on the International Standards Organisation's (ISO) firefighter ppe working groups, has returned from meeting in Berlin.

"I've completed a full risk assessment and hazard exposure matrix for rescue tasks performed around the world," says Mark. "This will also prove valuable for our work locally on the Australian rescue ppe /ppc standards which are still under development."

Mark believes positive votes — and therefore a published international standard — on Wildland firefighting ppc, and for the Selection, Use, Care and Maintenance (SUCAM) document, are now

closer. So is agreement on a Structural firefighting ppe/ppc standard, after progress was made in isolating an unacceptable Level 1 standard in the draft document.

"Mark's tireless work at ISO is something all firefighters should applaud," says UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall. "However, there's an urgent need for more end-user input from around the world, given the pressure from some manufacturers and European nations for the adoption of minimal standards."

A full report from Mark Gribble will be in the next edition of the Australian Firefighter magazine.

HOW MUCH HARMONY

In May, the states agreed to a framework for uniform OHS laws in Australia. Earlier this year a draft national model was proposed that disappointed the Union movement. "We were concerned about a number of aspects," says Peter Marshall. "The draft proposed the adoption of some provisions from the more poorly protected jurisdictions."

UFUA OHS coordinators believe that some

progress has been made since then but many challenges still remain. "Consistent national OHS laws will benefit firefighters, but only if they integrate the best from each state system, not aim for the lowest common denominator," says Peter Marshall. "We have an average of 21 deaths a day from either work related incidents or illness across Australia. That's 21 too many."