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**PPE COMPLIANCE REMAINS A TOP WORKPLACE CONCERN,  
ACCORDING TO SURVEY OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS AT NSC CONGRESS**

*Environmental Issues Rank High  
As do Health Concerns about Exposing Workers to Toxic Elements*

ROSWELL, Ga. (December 12, 2007) – For the second year in a row, a survey of safety professionals has found that noncompliance with personal protective equipment (PPE) protocols continues to be an issue in the workplace.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents said they had observed workers failing to wear PPE when they should have been, according to a survey of attendees at the National Safety Council (NSC) Congress, conducted by Kimberly-Clark Professional. Eighty-five percent of safety professionals answered yes to the same question in a survey undertaken by Kimberly-Clark Professional at the 2006 NSC Congress.

“Despite the undisputed need for PPE when undertaking hazardous tasks, people continue to risk bodily harm by failing to protect themselves,” said Randy Kates, general manager of the safety business for Kimberly-Clark Professional. “In this survey, we not only asked *why* people did not comply with PPE protocols, but *what* could be done to alter these behaviors.”

The main “why” was “uncomfortable” PPE, according to 62 percent of respondents who had observed noncompliance in the workplace. This was followed by: workers thinking PPE was not necessary for the task, PPE was “too hot,” PPE fits poorly, or was “unattractive looking.”

So it’s not surprising that when asked “what” could be improved about the PPE they were currently purchasing, three quarters of survey respondents said they would make it “more comfortable.” Safety professionals also gave the nod to more fashionable PPE. Eighty-four percent said that they would be more apt to purchase fashionable and attractive PPE if workers would be more likely to wear it and the price was comparable to what they were currently paying for similar products.

### **Off-the-Job Safety Programs**

At a time when workplace deaths are on the decline but injuries and deaths in the home have risen, 59 percent of safety professionals said they had programs in place to promote at-home safety. Another 28 percent said they had plans to create this type of program in the future.

Of those with existing safety programs, 68 percent said the offerings consisted of training programs or providing training materials on off-the-job or at-home safety. Forty-four percent said they encouraged employees to take home company-provided PPE and 16 percent said they have incentive programs for staying safe off-the-job as well as on. Ten percent said they allow employees to borrow high-priced safety equipment, such as gas detection equipment, for home use.

### **Green Issues Take Center Stage**

The survey also explored the effect of environmental considerations on purchasing PPE and other personal safety products. Here, the verdict was nearly unanimous. Ninety-four percent of respondents said environmental considerations and reducing the impact on the environment were important to them. Sixty-four percent ranked these as “very important,” while 20 percent described them as “somewhat important.” Ten percent said environmental factors were “increasingly important now,” as compared to a few years ago.

When it comes to green purchases, the top consideration was buying products made with recycled materials. Next was the ability to reuse or recycle products after use. Source-reduced products and packaging and a manufacturer’s overall commitment to the environment were nearly tied for third place. These were followed by:

- Purchasing from one supplier to reduce energy costs resulting from the transport of supplies from different sources.
- Products that are shipped in biodegradable packages with as little packaging material as possible.
- Products manufactured in a “carbon neutral” facility.

The survey also addressed another environmental issue, by asking respondents to choose between two types of industrial wiping products: A recycled cloth towel that is laundered and reused, releasing chemicals and metal contaminants in the wastewater of industrial laundries. Or a disposable paper or paper/polymer wiping product that is discarded into a landfill after use. Fifty-six percent said they would choose the disposable wiper. Twenty-seven percent selected the laundered towel. Seventeen percent said they did not know which product they would pick.

### **Health and Safety Concerns**

Respondents were also asked whether they were concerned about the potential health and safety issues faced by their workers as a result of exposure to oil, grease, heavy metal residues or other toxic elements on re-usable rental shop towels. Nearly three-quarters voiced concern, with 44 percent of these respondents saying they were "very concerned." Twenty-three percent said they were not concerned.

### **Survey Methodology**

The survey was undertaken at the NSC Congress in Chicago on October 16, 2007. The survey questionnaires were filled out by 197 safety professionals who reported being responsible for purchasing, selecting or influencing the purchase or selection of, or compliance with, PPE. Respondents were from the following fields: industrial manufacturing, construction, hazmat, emergency response, clean manufacturing, laboratories and science, health care, transportation, law enforcement and government. For full survey results, visit [www.kcprofessional.com/us/mkt/nscpressrelease](http://www.kcprofessional.com/us/mkt/nscpressrelease) .

### **About Kimberly-Clark Professional**

Kimberly-Clark Professional offers a range of well-known brands and product solutions for workplace settings, Do-It-Yourselfers (DIY) and away-from-home washrooms. Kimberly-Clark Professional workplace products include safety apparel, gloves and related accessories as well as task-engineered wipers for both "clean" and "industrial" manufacturing environments. DIY and professional contractor products include solutions for home improvement and automotive projects that make fixing up and cleaning up fast, easy and efficient. Known for innovative, quality solutions, Kimberly-Clark Professional's pioneering products include Coreless Bath Tissue, JRT Bath Tissue, the Kimcare All-N-1 Skin Care System and Kimtech Wipers. Kimberly-Clark Professional well-known brands include Kleenex, Scott, WypAll, Kimtech, KleenGuard and Kimcare. Kimberly-Clark Professional, located in Roswell, Ga., is one of Kimberly-Clark Corporation's (NYSE: KMB) four business segments and can be visited on the web at [www.kcprofessional.com](http://www.kcprofessional.com).

### **About Kimberly-Clark**

Kimberly-Clark and its well-known global brands are an indispensable part of life for people in more than 150 countries. Every day, 1.3 billion people - almost a quarter of the world's population - trust K-C brands and the solutions they provide to enhance their health, hygiene and well being. With brands such as Kleenex, Scott, Huggies, Pull-Ups, Kotex and Depend, Kimberly-Clark holds the No. 1 or No. 2 share position in more than 80 countries. To keep up with the latest K-C news and to learn more about the company's 135-year history of innovation, visit [www.kimberly-clark.com](http://www.kimberly-clark.com).

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## **SURVEY RESULTS**

Kimberly-Clark Professional Safety Survey

Conducted at NSC Congress

October 16, 2007

Questions 1–3, 4-6 and 8-11: 197 Respondents

Question 3a: 172 Respondents

Question 7: 116 Respondents

1. *Are you responsible for purchasing, selecting, influencing the purchase or selection of, or compliance with, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?*

	<u>Total</u>
Yes	100%

2. *Which of the following areas do you work in? (Select as many as apply.)*

Industrial manufacturing	46%
Hazmat	21%
Construction	21%
Emergency response	20%
Government	18%
Laboratory/science environment	12%
Transportation	10%
Medical or healthcare environment	09%
Clean manufacturing	09%
Other	21%

3. *Have you ever observed anyone in your organization failing to wear proper PPE in a situation when they should have been wearing it?*

<b>Yes (Subnet)</b>	<b>87%</b>
Yes, this has happened infrequently	45%
Yes, this has happened on numerous occasions	42%
No	09%
Don't know	05%

- 3a. *If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, did the worker or workers mention any of the reasons listed below for not wearing PPE? (Select as many as apply.)*

Uncomfortable	62%
Didn't think PPE was necessary for work task	55%
Too hot	52%
Poor fit	31%
Unattractive looking	24%
Not easily accessible from site of work task	09%
Don't know	17%

4. *If you could improve your current PPE, which of the following would you look for? (Select as many as apply.)*

More comfortable	75%
More cost-effective	61%
Improved quality	46%
What you want isn't available	04%
Other	04%

5. *Assuming workers would be more likely to use PPE if it is fashionable and attractive, would that make you MORE likely to purchase fashionable PPE if the price was the same as other PPE? (Select one answer.)*

<b>Yes (Subnet)</b>	<b>84%</b>
Yes, much more likely	45%
Yes, somewhat more likely	39%
No, not very likely	10%
No, it would make absolutely no difference	05%
Don't know/None of the above	02%

6. *While accidental deaths in the workplace continue to go down, the number of injuries and deaths in the home has risen by 30 percent since 1992. Has your organization taken an active role in promoting safety at home as well as at work? (Select one answer)*

Yes, you have programs in place to promote at-home safety	59%
No, but you hope to implement such programs in the future	28%
No, you do not have a program, nor do you have plans to create one	10%
Don't know/None of these	04%

7. *If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, which of the following actions is your organization taking to promote off-the-job safety? (Select as many as apply.)*

You have training programs or you provide training materials that cover off-the-job or at-home safety	68%
You encourage employees to take home company-provided PPE (safety glasses, gloves, boots, etc.)	44%
You have incentive programs for staying safe off-the-job as well as on	16%
You allow employees to borrow high-priced safety equipment, like gas detection equipment, for home use	10%
Other	08%
Don't know	03%

8. *How important are environmental considerations – and reducing the impact on the environment – to you in purchasing PPE and other personal safety products for your workplace? (Select one answer.)*

<b>Important (Subnet)</b>	<b>94%</b>
Very important	64%
Somewhat important	20%
Increasingly important now, as compared to a few years ago	10%
Not very important	03%
Not at all important	01%
Don't know/none of these	03%

9. *Which of the following environmental considerations are important to you in purchasing workplace products? (Select as many as apply.)*

Products made from recycled materials	46%
The ability to reuse or recycle products after use	41%
Products and product packaging that are "source-reduced," or manufactured to reduce the amount of waste in the first place	37%
A manufacturer's overall commitment to the environment	36%
Purchasing from one supplier to help reduce energy costs from transporting supplies from different sources	33%
Products that are shipped in biodegradable packages or with as little packaging material as possible	23%
Products manufactured in a "carbon neutral" facility that implements renewable Energy projects to offset carbon dioxide emissions	16%
Don't know/none of these	12%

10. *From an environmental perspective, if you were given a choice between two wiping products: 1) a recycled cloth towel that is laundered and reused, releasing chemicals and metal contaminants into the wastewater of industrial laundries, and 2) a disposable paper or paper/polymer blend wiping product that is discarded into a landfill after use – which of these would you be more likely to choose? (Select one answer.)*

Disposable wiper	56%
Laundered towel	27%
Don't know	17%

11. *Are you concerned about the potential health and safety issues for your workers posed by oil, grease, heavy metal residues or toxic elements on re-usable Rental Shop Towels? (Select one answer.)*

<b>Yes (subnet)</b>	<b>72%</b>
Yes, you are very concerned	44%
Yes, you are somewhat concerned	28%
No, you are not very concerned	16%
No, you are not concerned at all	07%
Don't know	06%