

# TUCKER SAFETY PRODUCTS, INC.

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## MOST IMPORTANT COMPONENTS TO “OVEN MITT” BURN INJURY PREVENTION:

The three major components of all thermal protective apparel, *in their order of importance*, are: **Liquid/Vapor Barrier, Insulation, and Outer Shell Fabric.**

- An effective **Liquid/Vapor Barrier** is the most important component of burn injury prevention because the majority of foodservice industry burns are caused by hot liquids, grease or steam. Accordingly, an effective (defined as one which will withstand 500°F for 24 hours, without breaking down, melting or becoming brittle) Liquid/Vapor Barrier should withstand everyday use at normal kitchen temperatures for the life of the apparel.
- **Insulation** is the second most important component of burn injury prevention because burns caused by contact with hot surfaces are the next most common type of burns in foodservice. Insulation is the thick interior padding between the outer fabric shell and the interior liner (if there is one), which absorbs the heat before it passes through to the body. The insulation should be a solid fabric, so that it will withstand repeated use without hot spots (often caused by the bunching of quilted fabric insulation). Insulation thickness and/or fabric type determines the amount of time that a hot object can be held (while using the protective apparel) before feeling pain or receiving a burn. Apron and sleeve insulation varies based on their direct contact time with hot surfaces.
- The **Outer Shell Fabric** is the least important component of burn injury prevention because it is NOT a primary factor in preventing burns. The outer shell is not the component which will prevent burns from hot liquids, grease and steam. Nor will it prevent burns from heat penetration. If the Outer Shell Fabric is Nomex or Kevlar, it can provide the heat and flame resistance of the apparel. The Outer Shell Fabric can be a determining factor of the longevity of the protective apparel, based on the durability of the fabric (determined by equipment, operational temperatures and operational abrasion of the fabric while in use).

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PURCHASING “EFFECTIVE PROTECTIVE APPAREL”:

- Is it truly **Safe**?
  - ✓ Does it protect the user from the operating **temperature** of the equipment?
  - ✓ Is it **impervious** to hot liquids, grease and steam?
  - ✓ Can it be used directly after washing, i.e. **when wet**?
- Is it **Sanitary**?
  - ✓ Can it be machine washed and dried daily to handle **25 washes or more**?
  - ✓ Can it be **washed at the sink** and taken directly back into service while wet?
- Does it provide **Value**?
  - ✓ If it **lasts longer**, does it actually **cost less** to use?
  - ✓ Does it last long enough to **reduce** ordering, storage, & shipping costs?
  - ✓ Will it help **lower insurance costs**, especially with an accompanying **safety program**?
- Is the “**Manufacturer**” willing to back their claims *in writing*?

# Effective Protective Apparel

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## Are Your Employees Really Protected from Burns? Are Your Uniforms and Protective Apparel Operating Efficiently and Effectively?

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*About the Author: Vincent Tucker is President of Tucker Safety Products, Inc., a manufacturer of protective apparel designed to prevent burn injuries in the commercial kitchen. In addition to the product line that includes protective oven mitts, aprons, hot pads and sleeves, Tucker has produced a safety video for use in restaurants, fast food chains, hotel cafeterias and bakeries. Tucker Safety Products is also known world wide for their educational and training seminars on burn injury prevention and effective protective apparel. Their seminars are available free of charge to the industry by calling (800) 786-7287.*

What you spend money on reflects your values. No one wants to waste money, yet if you purchase apparel that does not really do the job, are you spending money wisely?

There are four major points that should be considered when choosing effective protective apparel for burn injury prevention:

### 1. SAFETY!

You want each garment to cover the areas of the body in need of protection, and these products should protect the worker from all elements including hot liquid, grease and especially STEAM, no matter which station they are working in the kitchen

at any given time.

### 2. WASHABILITY!

Sanitation issues have become just as important as safety these days. All kitchen apparel needs to be washable, and you should be able to clean these products with the available means in your own operation (washers and dryers, dishwasher, sink, etc.)

### 3. COST!

The per-piece price off of an invoice is not an accurate indicator of the actual cost of protective apparel. It is easy to recognize that frequent bulk orders of ineffective, short-lived products at a lower price can actually you're your operation significantly more in the long haul.

### 4. COMFORT!

Effective protective apparel should properly fit the person using it and be comfortable to wear. You can have the best apparel available, but if it is not worn, it is rendered ineffective.

With the proper use of effective protective apparel you will reduce burn injuries, lower your workers' compensation insurance rates, increase productivity and improve employee morale.

Just about every one of us has been burned while working in a kitchen. Now think back to any one of those burns and ask yourself if you felt guilty or believed it was your fault that you got burned.

If you are like most people, the answer is yes, and you're not alone. Ever since the day we were born we are taught that fire is hot and if we touch it, we will get burned. Guilt is probably the main

reason why so many burns go unreported.

Burns are the most unreported injury in our industry today. However, there is one thing that can't be hidden and that is the loss in productivity due to these injuries.

When considering the purchase of Protective apparel, ask yourself the following questions in order to make sure you are getting effective protective apparel:

1. Is the garment resistant to kitchen temperatures so that it doesn't fall apart or burn up in a matter of one to two weeks?

2. Is it impervious to the elements that we are working with such as grease or hot liquid and especially steam?

3. Can we wash the product in order to maintain the sanitation level that is so necessary in our kitchen? Can it be washed with the facilities that we have in our operation (washer and dryer, the sink or even the dishwasher)?

4. Most of all, is the company (manufacturer) willing to put their claims in writing and also guarantee your satisfaction if the product does not work the way you need for it to work?

**Today there are alternatives to the conventional products that we have all become accustomed to seeing and using in the industry.**