



Welding and Contact Lenses

The urban myth regarding welders, who are contact lens wearers, sustaining serious eye damage as a result, has once again surfaced. The story goes that a welder, who momentarily raises his welding visor, is hit in the eye by a spark, which painlessly "welds" his contact lens to his cornea, which is then stripped off when the lens is removed, rendering him instantly blind in the injured eye.

Local Authorities in the North of England have recently been perpetuating this fear by circularising their own staffs with this supposed hazard information, without verifying the veracity of the story. A number of employers in Edinburgh, including this University and GEC Marconi, have received the circular, which Derbyshire County Council have now had to shamefacedly retract.

Anyone who is concerned should contact Health and Safety Department, who can supply a copy of the documentation which debunks this myth.

Naturally, the fact that this particular fear has no foundation in fact, does not affect the advice given on precautions to be taken by persons engaged in welding operations, outlined in Part 4 of the University Health and Safety Policy.

Please Note: This Guidance Note will also be permanently available as a supplement to the section on Welding and Brazing Operations, in Part Four of the University Health and Safety Policy: Mechanical Equipment, which may be accessed from the relevant section of our homepage.