

Press Release

August 2015

For immediate release

Manufacturers of personal protective clothing focus on comfort, style and sustainability

Several trends have emerged in recent years which are having a major impact on the personal protective clothing industry, according to a report in the latest issue of *Performance Apparel Markets* from the business information company Textiles Intelligence.

These trends include: a widening perception that comfort is a necessity rather than a desirable option in an item of clothing; growth in the importance of design and fashion; and a strengthening of commitment to sustainability throughout the supply chain.

To an ever growing extent, workers are demanding that their protective clothing not only safeguards their health in the workplace but is also comfortable to wear. Comfort was once given scant priority in the design of personal protective clothing but today it is viewed as critically important. Consequently, the industry has been making strenuous efforts to find the right balance between comfort and the need for protection.

Given the importance of maintaining wearer comfort, the use of high performance fabrics with moisture management and thermal regulation properties has become widespread and such factors have become powerful selling tools.

Employees in a broad spectrum of industries and services are demanding increasingly that their workwear is fashionable and stylish. Interestingly, it has been argued that employees are likely to be more effective and have a greater motivation to work if they are wearing protective clothing which is comfortable and stylish.

Also, there is evidence that an employee is more likely to wear a protective garment or accessory if the item is fashionably designed. Companies engaged in the supply of personal protective clothing are therefore placing increasing emphasis on creating innovative designs in a bid to encourage greater compliance with health and safety regulations.

Furthermore, much effort in the personal protective clothing sector is being focused on the establishment of practices which are more environmentally friendly. As part of this effort, companies throughout the supply chain -- from the sourcing of raw materials to retail selling -- have eliminated, or at least reduced, their use of materials which are considered to be potentially harmful to humans or the environment.

In fact, many companies in the industry have shown a greater willingness to switch to materials which may be less effective in terms of performance but are more environmentally sustainable.

The drive for sustainability has fuelled a surge in the use of post-consumer waste in the production of personal protective garments. Also, it has led to a slow but gradual shift away from materials based on petroleum towards those based wholly or partly on plants.

Looking ahead, it is expected that growing numbers of companies in the personal protective clothing industry will commit themselves to running their businesses in a more sustainable way.

Also, there is likely to be an acceleration of demand for personal protective clothing items which perform a multitude of functions and provide durability without sacrificing comfort and aesthetics.

As a result, innovation in the industry will focus heavily on enhancing comfort properties, creating more fashionable clothing styles, and producing materials using sustainable raw materials and processes.

However, overall growth in the market will ultimately be dependent on expansion in employment. This, in turn, will depend on demographic changes, levels of activity in key industries, and spending on services such as law enforcement, the military and public health care.

Ends.

“Personal protective clothing: providing performance, safety and comfort” was published by the global business information company Textiles Intelligence in issue No 52 of *Performance Apparel Markets*.

Other reports published in the same issue include: “Fast track: using crowd funding via Kickstarter to finance ventures in performance apparel and wearable technology”; “Product developments and innovations”; “Profile of Mount Vernon Mills: a US leader in flame resistant fabrics”; and “Business update”.

Performance Apparel Markets is a quarterly publication from Textiles Intelligence. Each issue provides an independent and worldwide perspective on the global performance apparel industry.

A year’s printed subscription to *Performance Apparel Markets* costs £780 (UK), Euro1,360 (other Europe, Middle East or Africa) or US\$1,725 (Americas or Asia Pacific). An electronic supplement is also available. Single issues are available on request.

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