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To Make Sandpapering Safe

By Dr. Alice Hamilton, Bureau of Labor Statistics

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By Dr. ALICE HAMILTON

Dr. Alice Hamilton, an employee of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U. S. Department of Labor, has taken a great interest in welfare and safety work.

Some time ago, she gave a large amount of study to the subject of sandpapering white-leaded surfaces—particularly in the vehicle industry.

The following article over her signature is a brief digest of the conclusions she reached. It can, of course, be regarded as an official opinion.

Painting and finishing departments of automobile and carriage manufacturers will find the article informative and useful.

"Rubbing down painted surfaces with sandpaper, either on old work to get a good surface for painting or for a finer finish on new work, is common; especially so in carriage finishing and the like. It is also practiced on house paints and is a dangerous occupation, regarded both in this country and in Europe as a serious menace to the health of the workman, on account of the dust which is caused.

"In many European countries the practice of dry-rubbing painted surfaces is forbidden by law, or greatly restricted. There such work is done wet, with pumice and water or oil, but sandpapering is more rapid and cheaper; moreover, the surface is left dry and in good condition to paint.

"In shops the dust may be largely removed by suction; but not in house-painting, and it will be a great gain if some new way of getting the result can be found. Sandpaper cannot safely be wet with water, which softens and destroys it; but it can be wet with oil of any kind, which rather toughens it than otherwise.

"It is now proposed to use a light mineral oil, such as is made for a substitute for spirits of turpentine, and which has a flash point not below 100° Fahrenheit, being therefore fairly safe as a fire risk if carefully used. Unlike turpentine, this does not injure the hands of the workmen; it has very little soften-

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