Valeting and cleaning cars with solvent-based products

General ventilation

Workplace and access
✓ Restrict access to those people who need to be there.

Design and equipment
✓ Check to see if you can substitute with solvent-free products.
✓ Make sure there is a good through draught for work done inside a vehicle, eg by using a fan with the windows open. Solvents used inside cars have led to staff falling unconscious.
✓ Keep the workplace well ventilated - 5 to 10 air changes per hour with a through draught.
✘ Never decant treatment fluid into an unlabelled container.
✘ Don’t store more than 50 litres of flammable liquid indoors. Use a flammables store.
✓ You need washing facilities for decontamination after handling products.

Procedures
✓ Store products containing chemicals securely in a cool, dry, dark place, capable of keeping in spills. Don’t store far more than you need.
✓ Read the instructions on the label carefully - follow the instructions for use.
✓ Put the cap back on the container immediately.
✓ Clean up spills promptly - practise how to do this.
✘ Never use aerosols or solvent-based trigger sprayers near a naked flame.
✓ Dispose of all products safely that you no longer need.

Special care
- Contact with many chemicals can lead to skin soreness and itching, rashes, blistering (dermatitis). Some can also damage your eyes.
- Solvent vapours in some cleaners can cause dizziness and headaches.
- Products containing dichloromethane (methylene chloride) may cause cancer.

Maintenance
✓ Follow instructions in maintenance manuals.
✓ Keep equipment in effective and efficient working order.
Cleaning and housekeeping

✓ Keep the work area clean.
✓ Clean up spills promptly - practise how to do this.
✓ Dispose of empty containers and wastes safely.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)
✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
✓ Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) may be needed. Seek advice from your RPE supplier. Make sure you fit the right cartridge before starting work.
✓ Make sure you know how to check that RPE fits correctly. Seek advice from your supplier.
✓ Use coveralls or work clothing to protect skin from contamination.
✓ Wear protective gloves - single-use nitrile gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low-protein, powder-free' gloves.
✓ Throw away single-use gloves every time you take them off.
✓ Skin creams are important for skin protection and help in washing contamination from the skin. These are not ‘barrier creams’. After work creams help to replace skin oils.

× Workers must not take work clothing home for washing. Use a contract laundry.

Health advice
✓ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every six months. If these effects appear, check the proper use of skin creams and PPE.
✓ If you use a product labelled ‘may cause sensitisation by skin contact’ or ‘may cause sensitisation by inhalation’, seek specialist advice. See Further information.

Training
✓ Show your workers this sheet and check that they understand it.
✓ Tell them about the risks of using the product - see product labels or Section 15 of the safety data sheet from your product supplier.
✓ Make sure everyone knows how to clear up spills promptly and safely.
✓ Warn workers about blood-borne diseases, eg hepatitis.

Supervision
✓ Check that the extraction is working properly, PPE is being used properly, and the rules on personal hygiene are being followed.
✓ Get safety data sheets from your suppliers and identify the more dangerous chemicals. Consider substitution.
✓ Swap workers over if you need to use hand-held tools for long periods of time to avoid hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS).

Further information

- Assessing and managing risks at work from skin exposure to chemical agents: Guidance for employers and health and safety specialists HSG205
  HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 1826 9
- Preventing dermatitis at work: Advice for employers and employees
  Leaflet INDG233 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1246 5)
- Health and safety consultants: the BOHS Faculty of Occupational Hygiene keeps lists of qualified hygienists who can help you. Contact BOHS on 0133 229 8087 or at www.bohs.org/