

USE OF ANTISTATIC FIBRES IN PROGARM® PRODUCTS

The Core products in the ProGARM® range include Antistatic Fibres usually accounting for around 2% of the fabric. We have traditionally included this component in our garments due to requests over recent years and the reduction in the price difference between the two options.

As a producer of garments designed to protect wearers in Hazardous Environments we understand that safety however is priority, and comments over the past 18 months about the use of Antistatic in garments in certain applications have caused us to research into this question further via discussions with our Clients and also an independent laboratory.

We will shortly be able to conclude this research and in the meantime have prepared these comments.

It is apparent that in some electrical industries, there are no benefits to having an antistatic content to a garment as in many of these industries, antistatic is not really an issue. This is in contrast to the Petrochemical Industries where there is clearly a spark hazard and antistatic has been used for many years.

On conducting some simple tests, it is felt that there are no adverse effects to have antistatic in garments despite some suggestions of 'tracking' or 'shocks' in some work environments.

In a theoretical example the hazard is more likely to be an explosion resulting in molten metal pieces as opposed to an electric shock hazard.

To this end we have focused on ensuring we meet the more stringent Heat & Flame EN Standard EN ISO 11612 as opposed to the now outdated EN 531 Norm and have also increased our Certification on our Woven Fabrics (for example 7418 Trousers) to include EI Molten Metal splash requirements.

Some associations therefore are stating that if there is a choice, then choosing Non-Antistatic would be their recommendation although it is important to note that this is purely a recommendation which is also assumed to be giving the end user some commercial benefits.

In reality, we believe that the commercial benefits which amount to a cost difference of only £1 to £2 on a garment are far outweighed by the extended lead times on garments that have to be made to order.

ProGARM® garments are available off the shelf in a vast array of sizes with extremely flexible lead times.

If you have any further questions regarding this document or would like to be kept up to date with further research please do not hesitate to contact our Sales Office.