

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

OSHA requires that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) be provided, used, and maintained when a formal and documented hazard assessment determines that its use will lessen the likelihood of occupational injury and/or illness. PPE, including safety glasses, hard hats, steel toe shoes, and chemical resistant gloves, is used to protect associates from the risk of injury by creating a barrier against workplace hazards. Although PPE is often used in addition to engineering controls, administrative controls and good work practices, PPE is most important when hazards cannot be completely eliminated or as additional controls are being implemented.

OSHA's PPE standard requires that employers pay special attention to eye, face, head, foot, and hand protection. (Separate programs exist for respiratory and hearing protection).

Hazard Assessment

Injury and accident reports should be reviewed to identify trends and common occurrences. In addition, all job functions at your facility should be inspected and a determination should be made as to the appropriate PPE required for you to perform your job task safely and effectively. Periodically, as job functions change, new chemicals are introduced, or as new protective equipment or information becomes available, the facility's hazard assessments should be updated and modified.

Protective Devices

All personal protective clothing and equipment should be specifically selected for the work being performed. Certain PPE must be selected to meet special government and industry standards.

Protective devices are generally available in a variety of sizes, shapes, styles and colors. Carefully select PPE that is properly sized, comfortable and best matches your personal preferences. Remember that PPE can only be effective when it is worn.

End users have the responsibility to maintain all PPE in a sanitary and reliable condition. The use of dirty, damaged, soiled or improperly maintained PPE may actually create a more dangerous condition. Dirty goggles, for example, could limit a person's vision at a grinder. Soiled or saturated gloves may lead to dry skin or dermatitis. Disposable PPE must be properly discarded after use.

Eye and Face Protection

Eye and face protection, including safety glasses with side shields, goggles, face shields, and welding helmets with filter lenses, may be required at a specific job or throughout your facility. Specific eye and face protection may be required at your job position if you are potentially exposed to flying particles, molten metal, acids or caustic liquids, chemical liquids, gases, or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation.

Head Protection

Head protection is commonly used when employees and contractors are working in designated construction areas or are at risk to falling objects. Bump caps (skull guards) may be required for protection against scalp lacerations and bruises from contact with overhead objects, such as pipes. Bump caps, however, cannot be worn as substitutes for safety caps/hats because they do not afford protection from high impact forces or penetration by falling objects.

Foot Protection

Foot protection may be required at a specific job or throughout your facility. All safety footwear shall comply with ANSI Z41-1991, "American National Standard for Personal Protection -- Protective Footwear." Safety shoes or boots with impact protection may be required to be worn in work areas where carrying or handling materials such as packages, objects, parts or heavy tools, could be dropped; and for other activities in which materials or equipment could potentially roll over a person's feet.

Hand Protection

Suitable gloves shall be worn when hazards from chemicals, cuts, lacerations, abrasions, punctures, burns, and harmful temperature extremes are present. Glove selection is based on a careful review of performance characteristics, hazards present, and duration and conditions of use. Be sure to always use the glove type specified for your job task. One type of glove will not work for all situations.

For additional information, refer to OSHA Standards 1910.132 -.140