

PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE) OVERVIEW

Employers must conduct a hazard assessment of their workplace to determine what hazards are present that require the use of PPE, provide workers with appropriate PPE, and require them to use it. Using PPE is often essential, but it is generally the last line of defense after engineering controls, work practices, and administrative controls. This toolbox talk provides a quick overview of some of the key types of PPE.

EYE PROTECTION

Recognize when you are required to wear eye protection.

The following is a direct quote from OSHA's eye and face protection standard at 29 CFR 1910.133(a)(1):

The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses appropriate eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, acids or caustic liquids, chemical gases or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation.



Sometimes, you have to use more than one type of eye protection at the same time. For example, you might have to wear safety glasses AND a face shield. This type of combination provides for MAXIMUM PROTECTION.

Sometimes, you might have to wear safety glasses OVER your prescription glasses. It may look funny, but you will be protected from any flying particles



that might injure your eyes. If your eyes get damaged, they might not recover. If you lose your sight, it can never be replaced! That is why it is very important to take good care of them. They are the only set you will ever have.

HEAD PROTECTION

Recognize when you are required to wear head protection.

Employees are required to wear hard hats where there is risk of falling objects.



When working overhead, employees may also need to wear appropriate head protection, like a “head sock” when there is a possible exposure to hazardous dust and other materials.



FOOT PROTECTION

Recognize when you are required to wear foot protection.

You are on your feet most of the time on the jobsite. Your shoes or work boots should offer both comfort and support. You should also consider wet floors and chemicals being used when selecting appropriate footwear.



Another consideration is in selecting the type of socks you should wear. A quality

work-sock that is thick or cushioned will be the most comfortable. Changing socks at lunch break will also offer more protection and comfort. Consider using foot powder, especially if you are susceptible to foot fungus, etc.

HAND PROTECTION

Recognize when you are required to wear hand protection.

You will be working with your hands all day, exposing them to cuts, burns, chemical exposures and other hand related injuries. Different types of gloves are available to reduce your exposure to injury and harm.

Neoprene Gloves: for use when working with solvents

Latex Gloves: for use when painting

Cotton Gloves: for use when while working with hand tools.

Anti-vibration gloves: for use when sanding, grinding, etc. Offers support and protection from repetitive motion injury.



Remember!
Remove your gloves while operating certain power tools like pipe threaders, etc.

Employers shall ensure that hearing protectors are worn by any employee who is exposed to an average of 85 decibels or greater

HEARING PROTECTION

Recognize that you are required to wear hearing protective devices in high noise areas.

OSHA requires employers to make hearing protectors available to all employees exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or greater at no cost to the employees. Hearing protectors shall be replaced as necessary.



They come in three basic types.

1. **EARPLUGS**...These are disposable and are moldable to your ear. They can cut noise levels up to 30 decibels.
2. **CANAL CAPS**...Are soft pads on a headband. They seal the entrance to the ear.
3. **EARMUFFS**...Helps protect you against moderate to high noise levels they reduce noise levels by 15 to 25 decibels.

BODY PROTECTION

Recognize that you are required to wear body protection when potentially exposed to hazardous materials.

Many of the chemicals used on a construction site can cause serious injury and burns when exposed to the skin. Body protection is required when working with these harmful materials.

Slicker Suits may be required when applying chemicals and solvents with potential for splash exposures.

A Tyvek paint suit is required when exposed to paint vapors.



RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Recognize that you are required to wear respiratory protection when exposed to dusts, fumes, vapors and other airborne hazards.

General Hazards

Two kinds of respirators can be used because there are two critical dangers sometimes present in the air we breathe at work.

- Chemical dust, vapors, gases, fumes, etc., can, if inhaled, cause serious, even fatal illness.
- Lack of oxygen can cause almost instant unconsciousness and, within minutes, death.



Employers and works must following OSHA's detailed regulation on respiratory protection (29 CFR 1910.134). In summary, companies must:

- Provide the correct respiratory protection when “ necessary to protect the health of employees,” backed by written procedures for normal and emergency use
- Train users how to select, wear, and maintain respirators, including proper fitting.

You, the users, also have responsibilities, to:

- Participate in respirator training and instruction
- Make sure your respirator fits properly
- Inspect the respirator before and after each use
- Use the respirator whenever required for protection.

Protection Against Hazards

Respirators are designed to make sure the air you breathe doesn't make you sick or kill you.

There are two basic types of respirators:

Air-purifying or filtering respirators are used when the air has enough oxygen but contains dangerous contaminants.

Air Supplying Respirators provide air from a tank or compressor through a hose. They are used when there is not enough oxygen in the air or in situations termed “immediately dangerous to life or health.”

Inspection

Since a respirator's purpose is to keep contaminated air out of lungs, it can't have any leaks that would let that air in. So it's very important that you inspect your respirator before and after each use.



TOOL BOX TALKS



Maintenance

When you take a respirator off, you have to remove it carefully so that you don't contaminate yourself. Follow our decontamination procedures, and then clean and disinfect the respirator after every use.

Store it in its proper place - away from dust, light, heat, cold, moisture, or chemicals. Be sure the rubber and plastic parts are in their normal position. Leaving a respirator upside down, uncovered, or out of shape may mean it's not going to be ready when you are.



Remember: PPE is not an option.