

CONSTRUCTION

Safety education for provided by the insurance specialists at: Peabody Insurance Agency

TARGET → ON SAFETY

Personal Protective Equipment Safety

Introduction

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is used when there is some type of hazard that has been identified and cannot be eliminated or controlled through other means. With your surroundings constantly changing at the site, various safety hazards will require PPE every day. Simply stated, when we have personal protective equipment requirements, it means a hazard may cause you injury. Failing to use the prescribed equipment puts you in potential danger.

When and Where Protection is Required

The company assesses all the work areas to find the hazards that are present, or might be present at some time, and then makes protective equipment decisions based on those assessments. This

is an ongoing process to make sure we are always current and aware of the hazards of our ever-changing work environment. Supervisors will keep you informed of the type of PPE for your work area or the specific jobs you perform. If you notice a hazard that could potentially require PPE to maintain your safety, don't hesitate to talk to your supervisor.

Proper Use and Care of PPE

No PPE will do you any good unless it is sized correctly and fitting properly. This may sound elementary, but everything from gloves to goggles must fit the right way in order for it to protect you properly. This is why you need to take some time to make sure all of your PPE is the correct size. If some equipment does not fit in the right way, wearing it is not

doing you any good at all.

PPE is effective when it is used as designed. For instance, not all gloves protect against all hazards: leather gloves provide good protection against cuts and slivers but do nothing for chemical safety. Safety glasses protect your eyes but not the rest of your face. For each type of PPE, it is important to know what it will guard against and what it won't.

PPE not properly maintained will not last long or protect you. In fact, poorly maintained equipment can be a greater hazard: dirty glasses create visibility problems, chemical gloves with pinholes will allow chemicals to touch your skin, and shoes held together by tape will not protect your feet and will create trip hazards. Before each use, inspect equipment for potential problems, and never use damaged PPE. Contact your

supervisor and only proceed with the task when you are equipped with properly maintained PPE. When you finish using the gear, clean it up so it is ready for the next use.

Hand Protection

The one thing to remember with gloves is there is no one glove that provides protection for every type of hazard. Knowing both the hazard you are guarding against and the type of protection required ensures you will properly protect your hands in all circumstances. Most gloves are designed for a specific hazard or task. Gloves used for paint and other chemical protection are not good for general tasks or with every type of chemical. Just because a glove is right for one type of chemical does not mean it provides adequate protection for every chemical. It is important to match the right glove to the chemical you are working with.

General work gloves, such as leather gloves, are good for protection against cuts, slivers and blisters, but won't protect against electrical shock or chemical exposure. Leather gloves are also appropriate when handling rough work or material.

Cut-resistant gloves are designed to improve the employee's grip when holding oily metal parts and to protect hands against metal burrs or other cut hazards. They

won't provide protection against corrosive chemicals. Depending on the task at your site, you may need more than one pair of gloves to guard against different types of hazards. Your supervisor will help you with all your glove selections.

Eye and Face Protection

Eye and face PPE provides the user with good protection when worn properly. Safety glasses must have side shields that are mounted to the frame. The glasses themselves should be adjusted so they fit properly around your ears and nose so they don't slide down while you are working.

Face shields provide protection for the whole face, where glasses only protect the eyes. They have adjustment ratchets on the headband that must be altered to the individual user's head.

Goggles provide good protection for eyes against dusts and mists. They should be adjusted properly so they fit snug on your face and there are no gaps between the goggle and your face. Vented goggles help to prevent goggles

from fogging up in warm weather conditions. Ear protection must be worn in loud volume areas even if you are not working directly with the tool causing the noise.

Head and Body Protection

Head protection is required in areas that have the danger of impact, falling or flying objects, and electrical shock and burn. In some instances, full-body protection is necessary to protect you against all harmful agents. When this type of PPE is required, it must be worn whenever you are in designated areas—even for short periods.

Foot Protection

When steel-toed safety shoes are required, make sure they are used in designated areas. When purchasing steel-toed safety shoes, make sure there is a tag indicating that the shoe build is in accordance with the ANSI Z41 standard. That ensures the shoe is up to commercial-grade standards and that the metal toe will not collapse if struck.

Summary

There are many different types of PPE that will help keep you safe. Make sure you are always wearing the right equipment for the job. Make sure all the equipment is adjusted properly and that you keep all the protective equipment clean. Never use any equipment that is broken or is not working properly. Damaged protective equipment provides no protection at all.