

# Personal Protective Equipment

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

You've probably heard a lot of excuses for not wearing protective equipment like a hardhat, gloves, and goggles. People say they're hot and uncomfortable or they make it harder to get the job done. Sometimes these things are true. But the inconvenience is a small price to pay for safety. A job injury might disable you for life.

Personal protective equipment is no substitute for other safety precautions. No hardhat is going to save you if a crane dumps its load on you. But if you use the right safety equipment the right way, you can reduce the danger of injury.

You or a crew member may want to add a personal story about personal protective equipment.

### Ask the Crew these Questions

After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.

1. We have posted all hardhat areas on this site. What hazards does a hardhat protect you from?

- It protects your head from falling or flying objects.
- It cushions the blow if you hit your head on something.
- It insulates you from burns and electric shocks (if it's a non-conductive type).
- It keeps your hair from:
  - Getting tangled in machinery or equipment.
  - Getting dust or chemicals on it.

2. What is the suspension in a hardhat for? How should you adjust it?

- The suspension keeps a cushion of air between the outer shell and your head.
- The cushion of air is important protection. Don't interfere with it. Never carry anything (like tools or cigarettes) inside your hardhat while you're wearing it.

- Adjust the suspension so there's 1¼ inches between the top of your head and the shell. (If the manufacturer's directions are different, follow those.)

Using the hardhat you brought to the meeting, show how to adjust the suspension.

3. How often should you inspect a hardhat? When should you replace it?

- Inspect the entire hardhat every day. Replace it immediately if you see damage to the shell, liner, or suspension.
- Don't decorate the hardhat. You may not be able to see damage if it has been painted or covered with stickers.
- Replace the hardhat if there has been a significant impact, even if you can't see any damage. The impact may have weakened it.
- Change the suspension in a hardhat for each new user.

4. When do you need eye protection?

You may need eye protection when there's danger from:

- Flying particles (from saws, drills, etc.)
- Splashes
- Dust
- Protruding or projecting parts
- Chemical vapors or fumes
- Bright light or ultraviolet rays (from welding, lasers, etc.)

5. What types of eye protection are there? How do you know which kind to use?

- Depending on the particular hazard, you may need safety glasses with side shields, goggles, or a full-face shield. We'll give you the right kind for the job you're doing.
  - If you wear goggles, there are several types. With acids and some other chemicals, you may need special splash resistant goggles. With lasers, use laser safety goggles). For each job, show the type of eye protection required, and explain where to obtain it:
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- Don't wear contact lenses on a construction site unless approved by a doctor.

6. When do you need to wear gloves?

Gloves can help protect you from:

- Flying particles
- Electricity
- Cuts
- Chemicals and radioactive material
- Cold or wet surfaces or environments
- Burns

7. Not all gloves are the same. How do you choose the right glove for the job?

- Use wire mesh gloves if there's an extreme danger of cuts.
- Use insulated rubber gloves (with canvas or leather outer gloves) for electrical work.
- Use non-flammable gloves when welding.
- Only special chemical resistant gloves (rubber or plastic) will protect you from chemicals. Different types stop different chemicals from getting through to your skin. The package should tell you which chemicals the glove is designed for. Chemical resistant gloves break down over time. Then the chemicals start to get through. Don't use them beyond their intended service time (shown on the package).

For each job, show the type of gloves required, and explain where to obtain them:

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8. What other protective clothing might you need?

- Wear steel-toed safety shoes when anything might crush or penetrate your foot.
- If you're using a jackhammer, steel should cover your whole foot, not just the toes.
- Wear boots when you work near hot surfaces, with concrete, or in wet locations.
- Wear an apron or coveralls to protect yourself from dust, chemicals, cuts, and burns.
- A full body suit may be necessary if you work with asbestos, lead, or toxic waste. It can also protect you from steam and from extreme heat or cold.

9. If you're working around dust or chemicals, how can you find out what protective clothing and equipment you need?

Ask your foreman for advice. Also read the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each chemical product. MSDSs are required by law. They'll tell you the ingredients, hazards, and what protective equipment you need.

10. Who is responsible for supplying protective clothing and equipment?

- The employer must supply it, make sure it fits, train you how to use it, and maintain it in a safe and sanitary condition. Tell your foreman about any defects you notice.
- All protective clothing and equipment must be a type, which is safety-approved. Look for a label stating that it meets American National Standards Institute (ANSI) specs.
- Protective gear which you supply yourself (like prescription safety glasses) must still comply with OSHA and ANSI requirements.

### **OSHA Regulations**

OSHA requires most of the safety measures we've talked about. We have to take these precautions it's the law. I have a Checklist of the OSHA regulations on personal protective equipment. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting.

### **Company Rules**

Besides the OSHA regulations, we have some additional company rules about personal protective equipment. For example, our rules spell out what will happen if you don't use personal protective equipment when required. Discuss company rules

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### **Comments from the Crew**

Ask the following: Do you have any other concerns about personal protective equipment? Do you see any problems on our job? (Let the steward answer first, if there is one.)

What about other jobs you've worked on? Have you had any experience with personal protective equipment that might help us work safer on this job?

## GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

## ENDING THE MEETING

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

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Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

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## **Comments**

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## **SAFETY TALKS REVIEW**

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is used only to supplement other safety measures when these measures are insufficient or during the time while these measures are being put in place.

1. If it is necessary, personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided by the company and worn by workers. The types used are appropriate for the work and give adequate protection.
2. Workers use only approved PPE in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Any employee-owned PPE complies with the same requirements as company-owned PPE.
4. PPE is maintained in safe and sanitary condition.
5. PPE is reasonably comfortable and isn't unnecessarily awkward.

## **Hazard Identification**

The company has a written safety and Health Program that meets all OSHA requirements. It includes identification of hazards on the site requiring the use of personal protective equipment, as well as regular inspections, accident investigation, and correction of hazardous conditions.

All hazards requiring personal protective equipment have been identified.

## **Head Protection**

1. Hardhat areas are posted, and employees are required to wear protective headwear in those areas.
2. Head protection complies with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard Z 89.1 1981, Requirements for Protective Headwear for Industrial Workers. (Helmets purchased prior to 1985 must comply with earlier versions of this ANSI standard. However, helmets this old generally should be replaced.)

3. Employees exposed to low voltage electrical shock and burns (600 volts or less) use head protection meeting the requirements for Class A or D in the applicable ANSI protective headwear standard.
4. Employees exposed to high voltage shock and burns (above 600 volts) use head protection meeting the requirements for Class B in the applicable ANSI protective headwear standard.
5. Helmet suspensions and liners are in good condition.
6. Employees confine their hair where there's a risk of injury from entanglement in moving parts, or a risk of contamination by combustible or toxic substances.
7. Employees are protected from falling objects by guardrails, toeboards, and other safety equipment and practices. (See separate Checklists on Guardrails and Scaffolds.)

## **Eye and Face Protection**

1. Workers who are at risk of eye injury due to flying particles, hazardous substances, projections, or injurious light rays are provided and use suitable eye and/or face protection.
2. Eye and face protection used on the site meets the requirements of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z 87.1 1979, American National Standard Practice for Occupational and Educational Eye and Face Protection.
3. Impact resistant safety glasses with side shields, or impact resistant goggles, are used for chipping, grinding, sawing, drilling, and other operations where there is a danger of flying fragments, chips, or other particle.
4. Only splash resistant goggles are used when working with acids and other hazardous liquid chemicals. (Splash resistant goggles are either unventilated, or have indirect ventilation.)
5. Employees doing welding use welding goggles with filter lenses or plates to screen out harmful light and ultraviolet rays. Goggles used are appropriate for the specific type of welding.
6. Employees who are exposed to laser beams use laser safety goggles, which protect against the specific wavelength and power of the laser.
7. Employees who use vision correcting glasses and need job site eye protection are provided with either: (a) safety glasses with suitable corrective lenses; (b) goggles with suitable corrective lenses; or (c) goggles to fit over the employee's own glasses.
8. Contact lenses are not used on the site unless medically approved precautionary measures are taken.

## Hand Protection

1. When work involves potential risk of cuts, burns, harmful physical or chemical agents, or radioactive material, workers are provided and use appropriate hand protection. (Exception: Not required if gloves might become caught in moving parts or machinery.)
2. Employees wear impermeable gloves of the correct type to prevent skin contact with hazardous substances, and replace used gloves as required. (To determine the appropriate glove for the substance, consult the MSDS for the product, or contact the glove supplier or manufacturer.)
3. Gloves used with vibrating power tools (jackhammers, chain saws, etc.) have vibration-damping material in palms and fingers. They fit properly and don't increase the grip force required to control the tool.
4. Welders use non-flammable gloves with gauntlets.
5. Employees use insulated rubber gloves for live high voltage electrical work. Outer canvas or leather gloves protect rubber gloves. Gloves are not used to replace other required safety measures.

## Foot Protection

1. Workers exposed to potential foot injuries from crushing or penetrating actions, hot surfaces, falling objects, or hazardous substances, or who are required to work in abnormally wet locations, are provided and use appropriate foot protection such as steel-toed safety shoes and/or boots.
2. Workers using jackhammers wear steel covering over the whole foot, not just the toes.
3. Rubber boots are worn when working with concrete or in water.

## Body Protection

1. When necessary, employees are provided and use appropriate body protection. (Depending on the hazard, this may include an apron, coveralls, or a full body suit, which can protect against toxic substances, steam, oil, water, and extreme heat or cold.)
2. Employees wear clothing appropriate for the work being done. For example, loose clothing isn't worn around machinery in which it might become entangled.
3. Employees working with asbestos, lead, and other regulated carcinogens wear protective clothing as required by the specific applicable OSHA standards.
4. Welders wear leather aprons, and shirts with long sleeves and collars, as well as required head, face, eye, hand, foot, and respiratory protection.
5. Workers wear bright orange warning garments (shirts, vests, jackets) when they work on foot near vehicular traffic hazards. In rainy weather,



they wear orange or yellow rain gear during hours of darkness, they wear reflectorized clothing.

### **Life Preservers**

Employees working over or near water who are not continuously protected by railings, nets, or safety belts are provided and use U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices. US Coast Guard approved ring buoys, lifesaving boats, and other safety devices are provided for emergency rescues.

### **Cleanup**

1. Employees are instructed to wash promptly and thoroughly after exposure to injurious substances, regardless of the type of protective clothing or equipment, which has been used.
2. Clothing which becomes saturated or impregnated with flammable liquids, corrosive substances, irritants, oxidizing agents, or other hazardous chemicals is promptly removed and not worn until cleaned.