



Personal Protective Equipment

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Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE, is defined as “all clothing and other work accessories designed to create a barrier against workplace hazards.” PPE should not be used as a substitute for engineering, work practice, and/or administrative controls. Personal protective equipment should be used in conjunction with these controls to provide for employee safety and health in the workplace. This equipment must be properly fitted and maintained in a clean and serviceable manner.

Personal protective equipment must not be altered or removed, even though an employee may find it uncomfortable. Because PPE is so important, it should be as comfortable as possible. Therefore, offering different kinds of PPE proves beneficial in employee attitudes toward the equipment. It is management’s responsibility to determine the kinds of PPE to be used on the job at a particular worksite, but it is everyone’s responsibility to see that everyone wears it on the job.

Some of the necessary PPE include the following:

Ear Plugs and Muffs will help protect against hearing loss. Depending on your work environment, you must determine which is best suited for you.

Gloves will protect your hands from extreme temperatures, chemicals, sharp objects and other workplace hazards. The type of glove must be carefully matched to the hazard. For example, glove materials offer different amounts of protection against different chemicals. This information is available from the glove manufacturer.

Respirators can protect you from hazardous fumes, vapors, dusts and particulates. A respirator should fit snugly around the face. As with gloves, the respirator should be matched to the hazard it is protecting you against.

Glasses and Goggles protect eyes from flying debris, chemicals and other hazards.

Hard Hats protect from low-hanging and falling objects.

Coveralls are usually used to prevent contamination of personal clothing and to prevent transfer of materials to your vehicle and home. Some coveralls are made of materials which will protect against other hazards, such as chemicals and temperature extremes. Make sure to match the coverall material to the hazard.

Boots and shoes protect feet and toes against sharp or falling objects. Two types of shoes and/or boots are slip resistant and steel toed.

It is important to communicate to all employees that PPE does not eliminate the hazard. Using personal protective equipment requires hazard awareness and training on the part of the user. Personal protective equipment can save your life. So, learn when and where to use personal protective equipment and how to use this equipment properly.