

:: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ::

Some employees may be required to wear personal protective equipment, or PPE, such as gloves or safety goggles, due to the nature and hazards of their jobs. If you are one of those people, you need to understand the importance of PPE, how to use it properly and how to maintain it.

PPE is used to prevent needless on-the-job injuries caused by items striking the eyes, falling objects, sharp edges, loud noises or hazardous vapors, mists or dusts. PPE should be a last resort in protecting workers from job hazards and should be used only if engineering controls (such as insuring a machine guard is in place) or administrative controls (such as rotating people through a job task) cannot be accomplished or is in the process of being accomplished. If PPE is required to perform a certain job function, it should be used all the time, every time.

There are several different types of PPE:

Eye Protection (safety goggles)

Hearing Protection (earplugs)

Face Protection (face shield)

Head Protection (hard hat)

Hand Protection (leather gloves)

Foot Protection (safety shoes)

Body Protection (rubber apron)

Respiratory Protection (respirator)

General information about PPE

- Must be in serviceable condition (no rips, tears, cuts; adjustment straps in place/usable; not deformed/misshaped).
- Should be checked before use. Do not use if there are any defects or damage. Report problems to your supervisor for correction.

Eye protection

- Safety glasses with side shields = most basic type of eye protection available.
- Safety goggles = use for hazardous chemicals/battery charging process for mechanical handling equipment, or MHE.

Hearing protection

- Required when exposure to noise levels is at or above 85dBA for an average of 8 hours.
- Hearing conservation program, or HCP, to include regular testing of hearing.

- Mandatory for operators of equipment generating sound above 85dBA.
- Recommended for individuals in the vicinity of equipment generating sound above 85dBA.

There are several types of hearing protective devices:

- Earplugs – Come in different types, colors and materials. Should be inserted properly.
- Earmuffs – Consist of rigid, molded plastic ear cups that seal around the ear using foam or fluid-filled cushions.
- Semi-aural devices – Usually consist of pods or flexible tips attached to a lightweight headband.

If you are required to wear PPE, you need to make sure it fits properly, you have received training in its proper use and it is in good condition.

Questions about PPE should be directed to your supervisor or local safety professional. For additional information, contact the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Health & Safety Division at:

717-772-1635

