

Topic: PPE Safety

Are You Doing All You Can to Get the Best From Your PPE?

To keep workers safe, employers are required to assess the hazards of a job and, where possible, eliminate or control those hazards at their source through the use of engineering or work practices. When these controls do not provide sufficient protection from the workplace hazards, the last line of defense is the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Can You Answer These 10 Questions?

In order to ensure that your PPE is an effective barrier between you and the hazards, it's important that you use and care for this equipment properly.

Whether your PPE is to protect your head, feet, legs, ears, eyes or respiratory system, there are some basic questions that are applicable to all types of PPE that you should be able to answer.

1. When must you use it? Are you required to wear the PPE in only specific areas of the site or during specific tasks or must you wear it at all times?
2. Does it meet the standards? Certain jobs require specific equipment. What serves as a suitable hardhat at one job will not necessarily be suitable for another.
3. Does it fit? Most PPE is available in different sizes. It's important to select equipment that fits properly and comfortably. Otherwise, it may not provide the protection you require and expose you to injury.
4. Is it compatible with other types of PPE you wear? If one type of PPE interferes with the fit or effectiveness of another, you might not be receiving the level of protection you need.
5. Do you know how to properly put it on, take it off, adjust it and wear it? Before performing any work requiring the use of PPE, demonstrate to your supervisor that you are clear on how to properly "don and doff" your gear. For example, when removing PPE that may be contaminated by chemicals or other hazardous materials, be sure you know how to remove it without exposing your bare hands or fingers to the hazard.
6. Are you cleaning it correctly? Don't risk compromising the effectiveness of your gear by using the wrong cleaning solvents. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for properly cleaning your PPE.
7. Are you storing it correctly? Protect your PPE from dust, sunlight, moisture, extreme temperatures, and chemicals and store it in a proper manner in a designated location.
8. Do you inspect it prior to each use? Damaged PPE will not protect you and must be replaced.
9. Do you know how to report and replace damaged PPE?
10. Are you wearing it? Even though employees are required to wear PPE for specific tasks, statistics show that many head injuries, face injuries, foot injuries and eye injuries continue to be sustained by workers while performing their normal jobs at regular worksites—while not wearing proper PPE.

The information presented herein has been compiled from various sources believed to be reliable; however, it cannot be assumed that all acceptable safety measures are contained in this publication or that other additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional circumstances. While every effort is made to ensure that information and recommendations contained within this publication are the best current opinions on the subject, no guarantee or warranty is made by Health Safety and You as to the absolute correctness or sufficiency of any representation contained in this publication herewith.

TOOLBOX TALKS



Conclusion

The employer has a responsibility to protect workers from known hazards. When those hazards cannot be sufficiently controlled, the employee has a responsibility to use PPE. Be sure you understand how to get the most out of this equipment.

Quiz

1. All safety goggles provide the same level of eye protection.

True or False

2. PPE is the first line of defense.

True or False

3. All PPE can be thoroughly cleaned using strong soap and hot water.

True or False

4. ALL PPE must be inspected prior to each use.

True or False

5. PPE that is damaged in any way must be replaced.

True or False

Answers:

1 False, 2 False, 3 False, 4 True, 5 True