

# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT 1

## SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

### PPE

Personal Protective Equipment or "PPE" for short, is a fancy name for the types of equipment workers use as their last line of defense in preventing injury and illness. Why last? Because many times hazards are better controlled by other, more positive means.

We'll probably never see the day when construction workers won't have to use any PPE. Construction by its nature is a constantly changing environment. Your own operations, or other trades working nearby, cause a variety of hazards - falling or flying objects, and ultraviolet from welding to name a few. We can do some planning to limit exposures, but in the mean time, know the types of PPE you need and keep it with you!

### HARDHATS

What about hardhats? You're up on a scaffold with nothing above you. But what about when you climb down for break and walk through areas where you can't control falling objects or impact hazards?

Toeboards at the edges of floors and scaffold platforms may keep some objects from falling, but don't, kid yourself. Keep your helmet with you at all times.

### RESPIRATORS

Take respirators for example. You get tired from wearing them. If they aren't used properly, they can actually cause greater exposures. Whenever possible, you have to attack the hazard at its source. If a brick saw is creating dust, you control the dust. If you're exposed to epoxy fumes, you ventilate. If you do put on a respirator, understand that you have to be thoroughly trained and fit tested to wear one.

### PROTECTIVE EYE WEAR

You only have one set of eyes. A particle in the eye, whether it's caused by chipping, grinding, or saw cutting could cause permanent damage. Protective eyewear is gaining wider acceptance on construction sites because it's getting more comfortable to wear. The trouble comes when you start trying to decide when and where to use it. The simple answer is - always! Why complicate matters? Just put it on and leave it on. Many site owners are now requiring workers to wear their safety glasses at all times. It makes sense when you consider the pain caused by even a small piece of dust blown into your eye by wind as well as the downtime getting it flushed out.

### **LONG-SLEEVED CLOTHING**

Hey macho man! Getting tan? Not at your employer's expense. You may not think of long-sleeved clothing as PPE, but it is. Every year, the sun causes hundreds of cases of sunburn and heat stroke. Those are "compensable" injuries that your employer pays for. It's an easy equation: The more an employer pays for comp, the less competitive he gets. Do yourself and your boss a favor. Keep your shirt on!



# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT 2

## SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

PPE stands for personal protective equipment which we use in our daily work activities. OSHA gives employers responsibility for ensuring that employees wear appropriate PPE to reduce exposure to hazardous conditions such as falling objects, noise exposure, toxic atmospheres, etc. Personal protection is the main objective and each of us must follow our employer's safety requirements.

The first form of PPE is a hard hat. This safety device provides us with an impact resistant covering that protects the head. We know that all of our body functions are controlled by 'that gray matter' inside our head, so don't take chances -- protect your brain -- wear your hard hat at all times!

Many other forms of PPE are available to you. Hearing protection in the form of ear plugs or muffs reduces the amount of noise reaching your ear drums, thereby preserving your hearing. Respirators provide protection against toxic substances that might enter our bodies through our respiratory systems. Safety belts with lanyards and full body harnesses are types of personal fall protection, but they are effective only if we use them.

The eyes and face are another area that needs to be protected. There are many types and sizes of spectacles and goggles to protect the eyes and each has a special application. Be sure you read the manufacturer's instructions before wearing them and choose the right type. Face shields should be worn if potential danger exists from physical, chemical or radiation agents.

Personal Protective Equipment can be cumbersome, uncomfortable, hot, etc. and employees occasionally don't wear it even though they know they may be risking injury. Any worker who fails to wear required PPE should be disciplined. Evaluate your work operations and define the hazards. Check with your supervisor for necessary PPE requirements and resolve to wear them. An ounce of protection is worth a pound of cure.

Keep your PPE clean and in good working order. Replace any defective gear immediately.



# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

## SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Each employee is to wear a hardhat, leather work shoes, a sleeved shirt, and long pants at all times. Clothing shall be free of excessive holes or tears. Avoid wearing clothing that could get caught in moving parts such as scarves, jewelry, laces, etc.

For any task that presents additional hazards such as cutting masonry, mixing mortar, etc., additional PPE will be utilized to protect from that hazard.

When cutting masonry, rebar, etc. with a mason's saw, grinder, or any tool that creates flying debris, safety glasses, face shield and hearing protection is required. Dust suppression must be used when cutting masonry to avoid inhaling silica dust. A paper type dust mask **does not** offer proper protection when dry cutting.

When mixing mortar and/or concrete, an employee must wear safety glasses due to flying particles of dry Portland, lime, etc. and due to flying wet mortar or concrete.

Other cases of additional PPE requirements may come up due to a certain process or chemical being used. Using a brick hammer on a rock job or washing down with chemicals also require safety glasses at a minimum.

Examine your job and make sure you have the Personal Protective Equipment you need, and be sure to ask all questions you may have about a situation.



# SUNGLASSES VS. SAFETY GLASSES

## SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Conventional sunglasses may protect the eyes from glare but, they do a poor job of protecting your eyes from the industrial hazards of splashes, flying objects, and dust. In fact, conventional glasses can present their own hazards in the workplace.

It is a fact that the frame and lenses used in safety glasses are stronger than the frame and lenses used in conventional glasses. When an object strikes the lens of safety glasses it is very unlikely that the lens would dislodge. This is not true of conventional eye wear, especially those types with wire frames. When an object strikes the lens of conventional glasses, the lens can shatter, showering the wearer's eye with shards of glass. This has happened. But, with a pair of approved safety glasses, the lens may break, but it will not shatter back into the eye.

What should you look for when selecting safety sunglasses? First, be sure the glasses are indeed safety eye wear, by checking to see if they comply with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards, the organization which sets the criteria for safety eyewear. This will be stated on the packaging and on the frame of the glasses. Look for "Z87.1." This is the ANSI designation identifying the glasses as approved safety eyewear.

Although not a necessity, consider glasses providing IR and UV protection. Look for glasses that are lightweight and adjustable. If the glasses don't fit properly, they won't be comfortable and thus they may not be worn. Try them on and adjust them before starting work. A good pair of safety sunglasses can be purchased for less than \$10. This is certainly a deal when you consider you are protecting your priceless eyes.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF GLOVES

## SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Your hands are your wage-earners.

Hands are hurt more often than any other part of the body.

Hand injuries don't have to occur. As talented as your hands are, they can't think, they're your servants, and it is up to you to think and keep them out of trouble.

Be sure you wear the right kind of gloves for the particular kind of work you are doing.

When you wear gloves, you aren't trusting to luck and you're not taking unnecessary chances.

Wear gloves when you are doing a job that needs them but, not around moving machinery.

Time spent in preparing your hands for the job will not only save trouble for you but will probably save time in doing the job.

