



Cornell University

Toolbox Safety Talk **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that employers protect their employees from workplace hazards that can cause injury. When engineering controls and safe work practices are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to their employees and ensure its use.

PPE Assessment

In order to determine what types of PPE are necessary, supervisors must first identify physical and health hazards in the workplace. This process is known as conducting a PPE Assessment. The PPE Assessment process must be documented using the PPE Assessment form (PPE Program, Appendix A). PPE Assessments should include the following:

- A walkthrough of the workplace to develop a list of potential hazards
- Identification of all physical, biological, chemical, and radioactive hazards
- A review of any history of occupational illnesses or injuries
- Identification of the appropriate required PPE for the hazard/task

RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors:

- Conduct a PPE Assessment for each job position or title under their direction
- Ensure that PPE is provided to employees and that it is used properly

Employees:

- Must utilize the provided PPE in accordance with the instruction and training provided
- Employees must inspect their PPE, properly care for and store their PPE, and attend PPE training

REQUIRED PPE

- **Safety Glasses, Goggles, or Face Shields** – are required if employees are exposed to hazards such as flying particles, chemical splash and vapor, infectious materials, and harmful light radiation
- **Protective Gloves** - shall be used to protect the hands against skin absorption of harmful substances, chemical burns, electrical hazards, abrasions, cuts, and punctures.
- **Hard Hats** – are required when there are overhead hazards, electrical hazards, or there is the potential to bump the head against fixed objects
- **Safety Shoes** – are required when the feet are potentially exposed to crushing, puncture, electrical, and slip hazards.
- **Electrical PPE** – is required when employees are potentially exposed to live electrical conductors
- **Respirators** – are required when respiratory hazards cannot be safely controlled with engineering or work practice controls
- **Ear Plugs & Ear Muffs** – are required when employees are exposed to hazardous noise - >85 dBA 8 hour time weighted average

***Note:** Employees should check with their supervisor concerning department specific procedures and policies pertaining to PPE.

SELECTING PPE

- When selecting PPE, fit and comfort should be taken into consideration
- Most PPE comes in a variety of sizes and care should be taken to select the proper size for each employee
- Improperly fitted PPE may not provide the level of protection desired and may discourage employee use
- OSHA and Cornell University require that many categories of PPE meet or be equivalent to standards developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

PPE Training

Employees who are required to use PPE must be trained in its use. PPE training will cover when PPE is necessary, PPE donning and doffing, limitations, inspection, and maintenance of PPE.

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