

# Protective Clothing Fact Sheet

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**P**rotective clothing is a key part of personal protective equipment (PPE), designed to protect workers from various workplace hazards. As part of a safety strategy, protective clothing includes garments worn to shield the body from harm, ensuring workers stay safe on the job. This publication helps employers select and provide the right protective clothing for their workers and job tasks.



## Types of Protective Clothing

When selecting protective clothing, employers must choose the right option based on specific workplace hazards:

### **Coveralls**

Coveralls are full-body garments that protect workers from chemical splashes, dust, and other contaminants. They come in disposable or reusable materials, each suited to different work environments.

### **Chemical-resistant suits**

These suits offer full protection against hazardous chemicals, essential when working with corrosive or toxic substances.

### **High-visibility clothing**

Reflective vests and jackets improve visibility in low-light areas or high-traffic zones, reducing the risk of accidents.

### **Flame-resistant clothing**

These specially treated garments protect against fire and heat, essential in industries with fire hazards.

## Proper Use and Maintenance

### **Fit and comfort**

Protective clothing must fit well to ensure maximum protection and comfort. OSHA emphasizes the importance of proper fit for all workers, including smaller individuals and pregnant women, to ensure PPE effectively reduces workplace risks. Employers must offer a range of sizes instead of relying on a one-size-fits-all approach. Properly fitted PPE also encourages workers to wear it consistently.

### **Daily maintenance**

Workers must wear clean protective clothing each day and change it immediately if it becomes contaminated.



or safety helmets offer better protection than fabric or straw hats, which absorb hazardous substances.

## Training and implementation

Employers must train workers on how to use, care for, and maintain protective clothing. The training must cover:

- When protective clothing is needed.
- How to put it on and take it off correctly.
- What the clothing can and cannot protect against.
- How to clean, maintain, and dispose of the clothing properly.
- How to report ill-fitting or damaged protective clothing.

## Regulatory Compliance

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to assess workplace hazards and provide appropriate protective clothing. Employers should stay informed about OSHA's evolving standards and be prepared to adjust their practices accordingly.

## Conclusion

Protective clothing is a critical part of workplace safety, helping to shield workers from potential hazards. By selecting the right protective gear, ensuring a proper fit, and providing thorough training, employers can greatly reduce the risk of workplace injuries and illnesses. Protective clothing must also work alongside other safety measures, such as equipment, safety systems, and workplace policies, to form a complete safety program.

### **Proper disposal**

Discard disposable clothing after use or if damaged to maintain its effectiveness in protecting workers.

## Specific Protective Clothing Requirements

### **Hand protection**

Liquid-proof gloves without cloth linings or leather components are essential for handling pesticides and other hazardous materials.

### **Foot protection**

Liquid-proof, unlined boots or overshoes protect feet from chemical exposure. Workers must wear the pant legs tucked inside the boots to prevent contamination.

### **Head protection**

Liquid-proof, washable hats made of plastic



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