



Personal Protective Equipment

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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can help protect employees from physical and health hazards while in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to check their workplaces for physical and health hazards that may require the use of PPE. If hazards are found that cannot be controlled by engineering or administrative means, the employer must provide employees suitable PPE and train them in its use. Trained employees must be able to demonstrate that they understand how to wear, clean, and store the PPE correctly. The OSHA standard for PPE is contained in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910, Subpart I.

Physical hazards that require PPE can include:

- falling, moving or flying objects;
- moving equipment or parts;
- sharp objects; and
- extreme temperature.

Health hazards that require PPE can include:

- chemical exposures;
- materials that can be inhaled or irritate the eyes or skin; and
- sound levels above an average of 85 decibels (dB) for eight hours.

The type of PPE that should be used by an employee depends on the nature of the hazard.

1. Protective eyewear can protect employees from a variety of hazards. Employees should always wear goggles, safety glasses, or face shields when working with or around chemicals, flying particles, or any potentially infectious materials that could get into the eyes.
2. Protective gloves made of rubber, neoprene, nitrile, Kevlar, or steel mesh can protect employees' hands from chemicals or cuts. Employees should check with their supervisor before using gloves, because different types of gloves protect the hands from different chemical or physical hazards, and in some cases can create additional hazards.



Courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

3. Protective footwear can provide protection against many hazards. Employees should wear:
 - shoes with metal toe protectors when handling heavy objects that could crush their feet;
 - rubber or chemical-resistant boots with non-slip soles and heels when working near chemicals, water, or sewage; and
 - appropriate non-conductive shoes around electrical hazards.
4. Employees should wear hardhats or helmets to reduce the risk of injury when working in an environment where falling objects or bumping hazards are present.
5. In an environment where noise levels exceed 85 dB, hearing protection such as earplugs or earmuffs can be used to reduce the sound to a safe level.
6. PPE required for specific hazardous chemicals will be specified on the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for those chemicals.

Any employee who is unsure about what PPE to use or does not have the appropriate PPE should ask their supervisor for assistance.

This fact sheet was published with information from the OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment FactSheet and the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC).

The DWC also offers several free personal protective equipment safety publications online at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html>, including:

- *Personal Protective Equipment Analysis Worksheet;*
- *Personal Protective Equipment Safety Training Program; and*
- *Personal Protective Equipment Workplace Program.*

The TDI-DWC features a free occupational safety and health audiovisual library. For more information, call 512-804-4620 or visit the agency website at <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html>.