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Eye Protection

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If something happens to your eyes, there is no quick fix. Medical science can replace a lot of things on and in your body, but when your eyes are gone, they are gone forever. Wearing eye protection is one simple way to keep your eyes safe.

Eyes are delicate and very easy to damage. A hard blow is not necessary to cause injury. In fact, all it takes is a tiny sliver or speck of metal, a particle of dust, or trace of chemical to do a great deal of damage to the eyes.

What Must an Employee Know

If you are exposed to dust, metal shavings, grinding wheels, flying wood debris, or other workplace hazards, you need to take the proper precautions and protect your eyes. If you do not, it is possible to lose the precious gift of sight, meaning you may never see your wife, husband, or children again.

OSHA Requirement

It is a good thing to remember that OSHA rules establish minimum standards for both employer and employees. It states that

"The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particles, liquids, chemicals, acids or caustic liquids, chemical gasses or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation."

Glasses and other eye protection need to be properly cared for. Here are a few tips:

- Make sure your glasses and other face protection fit. If they do not fit properly, you might be tempted not to wear them. If your safety glasses slip, are crooked, or are too tight, take a few minutes and have them adjusted properly.
- Keep glasses and other forms of face protection clean. Dirty lenses lessen your visibility. Wash them regularly with mild soap and water or eyeglass cleaner; then polish with a soft dry cloth or a tissue.

Anti-dust and anti-fog spray works well on both glass and plastic lenses.

- Keep your glasses in a case when you are not using them. Pits, scratches, or other damage can result if you stick your glasses in a pocket or toss them in a toolbox. Damage to lenses can lessen impact resistance, resulting in less than full protection.

Some other important eye safety tips are:

- A contact lens was not designed for eye protection.
- Never try to remove foreign matter from your eyes or another employee's eyes. Playing doctor will probably make the condition worse. Get to the company medical provider right away.
- Have your eyes examined periodically. Accidents are sometimes the result of poor vision.

Finally, if there is ever any doubt in your mind about eye protection needed on any job or in any location, consult your supervisor. Don't guess what eye protection you might need. It is not worth the possibility of spending the rest of your life without being able to see.

