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## PPE Part 2

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# Supervising Safety Newsletter

Last month we talked about the benefits of using head, eye, face, and respiratory protection. Now it's time to go into the importance of hand protection, safe footwear, and hearing protection. These three PPEs are just as important as the first three. It pays to know the right ways to use them and how to choose the proper PPE for the job.

### **HAND PROTECTION**

Did you know that every year in the world of manufacturing, construction, and the service industry, about 150,000 injuries to the hands and fingers are reported? This is the case with virtually all jobs that require the use of hands. However, this fact does not justify such a large number of hand and finger injuries.

With the use of gloves, hazards are more manageable in tasks that involve working with chemicals, glass, sheet metal, electricity, hot materials, and slippery objects. Gloves are specially designed according to the type of work that needs to be performed. Some gloves may be made of leather or rubber, while others may be electrically insulated or nitrile coated.

Keep in mind that the risk of accidents is higher if gloves are worn while operating power tools or machinery that present the risk of entanglement. This has been the case of many incidents that led to the loss of hands or fingers.

### **SAFE FOOTWEAR**

The need for proper footwear is extremely important while working at IPSC. Without it, slips, trips, and falls are likely to occur. Employees are also more prone to ankle, impact, and puncture injuries when not wearing the proper footwear for their tasks. Most specially designed boots, shoes, foot guards, and leggings serve as protection against chemicals, hot substances, and slippery floors.

Whatever footwear is used, remember that it should fit properly and comfortably. Make sure also to keep the laces securely tied.

### **HEARING PROTECTION**

Hearing protection is perhaps the PPE type most taken for granted. Noise-induced hearing loss is the term for hearing damaged by excessive noise. People differ in their sensitivity to noise and there is no way to determine who is most at risk. Factors such as sound pressure (decibel level), frequency (hertz), and exposure time all play a role in determining whether noise is harmful or just annoying. However, you should consider your hearing at risk if noise affects you in one of the following ways:

- You have to shout above noise to make yourself heard.
- You have ringing in the ears for several hours after exposure to noise.
- You have difficulty hearing normal sounds for several hours after exposure to noise.

The best way to control noise in the workplace is by making use of engineering controls. If this is not feasible, employers must provide their workers with proper hearing protectors. At IPSC there are several types of earplugs and earmuffs to choose from. Make sure to find the kind of hearing protection that works best for you. A comfortable and proper fit will give you better hearing protection than the ear plug with the highest NRR rating that doesn't fit correctly.

Both of these hearing protectors are used to control noise and not to eliminate it. That's why they are only effective if worn the whole time you are exposed to hazardous noise.

