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## Importance of PPE

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# Supervising Safety Newsletter

Too many accidents happen every year. Many of those accidents happen because of the absence, lack of, or misuse of personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is designed to guard against risks that are present in the workplace. This can be anything from burns and falling debris to electric shock.

OSHA strictly regulates employers to provide their employees with proper PPE. However, some accidents happen not because of absence or lack of PPE, but because some employees choose not to wear it.

Here are three types of PPE commonly used in the workplace. Take note of how each provides protection and what you must remember to maximize its benefits.

### **HARD HATS**

Hard hats are required to be worn in all areas and at all times except for office areas, control rooms, lunchrooms, electrical communications rooms, battery rooms, vehicles, labs, and parking lots, unless the work that is being performed in these areas requires the use of a hard hat. Hard hats are designed to protect against impact and penetration of flying and falling objects. Hard hats may be equipped with accessories such as face shields and earmuffs.

Employees must never alter their head protection in any way. Remember that a hard hat that is either too large or too small is not appropriate for use.

### **EYE AND FACE PROTECTION**

While you may be safe from impacts with your hard hat, you may still be at risk for eye and face injury. With the use of goggles, spectacles, and full-face shields, you can get the protection you need for your eyes and face. Such equipment is designed to protect you while performing metalworking, woodworking, air tool operations, and hot work. This type of PPE is also

helpful when performing power or pressure spray operations and chemical handling processes.

The type of operation being performed will determine the type of eye protection needed to ensure that you are protecting your eyes appropriately.

### **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

Sometimes what you don't see can hurt you. This is especially true in workplaces with the presence of toxic airborne substances. This is where respirators come into the picture.

Respirators are designed to protect employees from dust, fumes, paint spray, pesticides, and other substances that could bring about long-term or permanent impairment or even death. Respirators must be cleaned, used, and stored properly in order for them to protect the way they are designed to. Remember that OSHA requires employees to be clean shaven when wearing a respirator. Employees must also know the type of hazard they are protecting themselves against. The hazard will determine the type of respirator and respirator cartridges that will be needed.

