

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in one period of observation, hard hats were worn by only 16% of workers who sustained head injuries, although 2/5th's were required to wear them for certain tasks at specific locations. Only 1% of approximately 770 workers who suffered face injuries were wearing face protection. 23% of the workers with foot injuries wore safety shoes or boots. About 40% of the workers with eye injuries wore eye protective equipment. A majority of these workers were injured while performing their normal jobs at regular worksites.

Wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is critical to successfully working in many high-risk work environments. In some cases, PPE stands as the only control for specific hazards. PPE is clothing and equipment that protect various parts of your body against hazards you may be exposed to on the job.

There are so many ways to be injured on a normal worksite, that forsaking PPE is allowing for substantial risk of harm. Damage can occur to the body in several ways, including respiratory distress, accidental ingestion, and what gets absorbed or injected into the skin. That's just to name a few.

Some hazards may be controlled by eliminating them at the source through engineering and administrative controls, but personal protective equipment (PPE) is a crucial safety precaution often used in combination with other controls. When those controls can't eliminate the hazard, PPE can provide acceptable protection within its capabilities and limitations. It's important to remember that PPE doesn't eliminate hazards; it just minimizes exposure. Therefore, PPE should be viewed as the "last line of defense" in protecting you from workplace hazards. Wearing the PPE provided by a company is the last thing a worker can do to keep themselves on the job and out of harm's way.

Source: <https://vividlearningsystems.com/courses/osha/personal-protective-equipment>

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Respiratory Protection

The quality of the air we breathe, both on and off the job, has major implications for our respiratory health. That's why some regions in the United States alert local citizens when smog or air pollution reaches an unsafe level.

Certain industrial work environments threaten respiratory health; people who work in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and other industries will be inevitably exposed to respiratory hazards on the job. By performing tasks where irritating dust, chemical fumes, and other airborne contaminants are present in harmful concentrations, or where the percentage of oxygen is insufficient, these workers have to be mindful of the air they are breathing.

That is why the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to take the necessary precautions to control for respiratory hazards at worksites. The major rule is that if an employer cannot eliminate respiratory hazards, the employer must provide employees with respirators to protect their health. So from job to job, there's much to discuss about personal protective equipment and systems for safeguarding respiratory help.

Generally, and depending on myriad factors, the effect on the body from inhaling a contaminant may be immediate or may not show up for many years, and symptoms can range from mild and temporary to severe, with permanent injury or even death.

Source: <https://vividlearningsystems.com/courses/osha/basic-respiratory-protection>