

Quick Tab 5 - Prevention

Personal protective equipment, or PPE, can help mitigate many hazards and protect employees from serious injuries. However, PPEs should not be your first option when hazards can otherwise be eliminated. Other controls could eliminate the safety concern altogether. The best way to determine what type of PPE is needed is through a job hazard analysis. The hazard analysis is required for any job that may pose a risk. There are four things you'll need to do.

1. Identify jobs that present known or potential hazards.
2. Break each job into steps.
3. Determine any hazards associated with those steps.
4. Correct with personal protective equipment or other safe practices.

Eye and face protection

Eye and face protection are one of the most important protective measures you can take in the lab or other work areas. They must be worn when the following (or other) hazards are present:

- Flying particles
- Molten metal
- Liquid chemicals
- Acids or caustic liquids
- Light radiation
- Chemical gases or vapors

Gloves

The type of gloves (such as neoprene or Nitrile) needed vary depending on the task and hazardous material being handled. A job hazards analysis and appropriate safety training are essential.

Respiratory protection

Respirators can significantly reduce the level of exposure to a hazardous substance when used correctly. Several requirements must be met before employees are permitted to use respirators. Contact EHSRM for more information.

Hearing protection

Earmuff-style coverings or earplugs can help reduce hearing loss for employees who are likely to be exposed to noises above a certain threshold.

Head protection

Hard hats or bump caps may be required for employees at risk of a head injury on construction sites or other work sites.

Foot protection

Safety-toed boots or shoes, or other types of specific footwear, may be required for certain types of activities.

Additional safety courses may be required for employees depending on their activities. New employees should complete their safety training right away. Requirements change periodically but may include the following:

- Hazard communication
- Employee safety orientation
- Emergency action plan
- Slips, trips and falls

The Unsafe Condition Reporting Program is essential to reducing incidents, accidents or injuries. Encourage your employees to bring up safety concerns and report them right away.

Discussion point: Name two specific jobs your department performs and determine which PPE is required for those activities. Defend your selection for the particular PPE you've chosen.

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