

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is clothing or equipment designed to protect you from physical hazards in the workplace. Note that the wearing of PPE does not eliminate the hazard; it places a barrier between you and the hazard. Attempts to eliminate and control workplace risks and hazards should always be addressed first. When given PPE, make sure you know why it's been issued, the correct way to use, and where it should be stored.

When it comes to eye accidents, there is no such thing as a second chance. That is why it's important to select the right type of eye and face protection. They are designed for protection against different hazards. Whatever type of eye protection you choose, it is important to wear it at all times. Examine your eye wear regularly and before the start of each work day and ensure it is clean and free from scratches that could affect your view. Eye protection can include safety glasses, goggles, and face shields.

Proper safety footwear can help you avoid twists and strains, prevent slips, trips, and falls, and protect your feet from falling objects and boot punctures. Your foot protection will depend on the specific task you are doing and the hazards you could encounter. Inspect your footwear regularly to ensure it continues to provide traction and protection for your feet. If required to wear steel toed boots, ensure this footwear is CSA approved.

Hardhats are required on all worksites when working on construction sites. To work properly they must be fitted securely on the top of the head and bands adjusted to ensure the suspension system distributes the load evenly over your entire head. The best way to wear a hardhat is with the brim facing forward. You should inspect your safety headwear regularly before you use it and should be replaced when the hardhat is worn or the shell is punctured, split or cracked.

Exposure to excessive noise may create permanent hearing loss. To protect yourself wear hearing protection that is appropriate to the task. This may include earplugs or earmuffs. Ensure that you wear hearing protection as the manufacturer requires. When working in areas with excessive noise, Noise Awareness training is required. This training will review important information about health effects, legal requirements, types of hearing protection and how to wear them.

Every trade has its own hazards. Specialized PPE may be required for some of those hazards. This may include respiratory protection, which could include a simple dust mask to a self contained breathing apparatus. Hand protections could be needed if handling hazardous materials. Special clothing may be required because you could be exposed to high temperatures. Talk to your supervisor to ensure you have the right protection that will protect you in the workplace.

Having the right tools and supplies will ensure you perform your work safely and effectively. Remember before You Start – Be Safety Smart.