

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The standards for head, face, eye, and foot protection were rewritten to reflect the current technology and improvements in PPE. The standards include provisions for assessing hazards and training of workers. The employer must perform a hazard assessment of the workplace to determine if any hazards are present that would necessitate PPE. The employer will have to select appropriate equipment for the hazards found.

Workers must receive training in the use of PPE to determine:

- when equipment is necessary
- what equipment is necessary
- how to put on, remove, adjust and wear the PPE
- the limitations of the equipment
- proper care, maintenance, useful life and disposal of PPE

Eye and Face Protection: Workers must use appropriate eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, acids or caustic liquids, chemical gases or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation. Requirements for side protection, prescription lenses, filter lenses, and identification of the manufacturer are spelled out.

Head Protection: Employees must wear protective helmets when working in areas where there is a potential for injury to the head from falling objects. Protective helmets designed to reduce electrical shock hazards must be worn by each affected employee when near exposed electrical conductors which could contact the head.

Foot Protection: Employees must wear protective footwear when working in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries because of falling or rolling objects and objects piercing the sole of the shoes. Where employees' feet are exposed to electrical hazards protection must also be provided.

Hand Protection: Employers must select and require employees to use appropriate hand protection when employees' hands are exposed to hazards such as those from skin absorption of harmful substances, severe cuts or lacerations, severe abrasions, punctures, chemical burns, thermal burns, and harmful temperature extremes. Employers must base the selection of the appropriate hand protection on evaluation of the performance characteristics of the hand protection relative to the tasks to be performed, conditions present, duration of use, and the hazards and potential hazards identified.



A Word on the Purchase of PPE

In most cases, your employer must provide and purchase PPE required to do your job safely.

In other cases, your PPE purchase may be covered by your Unit Contract.

Check with your Union Representative, if you have any questions on this issue.

This factsheet was produced through a grant from the New York State, Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Training and Education Program (C7666) by District Council 37, AFSCME, Education Fund, Safety and Health Unit.