

TOOLBOX TALK

Personal Protective Equipment

WHY THIS MATTERS

PPE is your last line of defense against workplace hazards. When engineering controls and safe work practices aren't enough, PPE protects you from serious injury or death. Wearing the right PPE correctly can mean the difference between going home safe or not.

70%

Of eye injuries happen when PPE is not worn

2K+

Head injuries per year from not wearing hard hats

100%

PPE-preventable injuries each year

7 Types of PPE You Must Know

Each protects a different part of your body — know when and how to use them:

1 HEAD — Hard Hat
Protects against falling objects and bumps. Replace after any impact or every 5 years.

2 EYES — Safety Glasses / Goggles
Shields from flying debris, dust, chemical splash. Match lens to the hazard.

3 EARS — Hearing Protection
Earplugs or earmuffs when noise exceeds 85 dB. Prolonged exposure causes permanent hearing loss.

4 LUNGS — Respiratory Protection
Dust masks, half-face or full-face respirators. Must be fit-tested. Match filter to the hazard.

5 HANDS — Gloves
Cut-resistant, chemical, insulated, or impact gloves. Choose the right type for the task.

6 FEET — Safety Boots
Steel or composite toe, puncture-resistant sole. Must be in good condition with intact tread.

7 BODY — High-Vis / Fall Protection
Reflective vests near traffic. Harness and lanyard when working above 1.8 m (6 ft).

Before You Start — PPE Checklist

- Do you have the correct PPE for today's tasks?
- Has all your PPE been inspected for damage?
- Does your PPE fit properly and comfortably?
- Do you know how to use each piece of PPE correctly?
- Is replacement PPE available if needed?

PPE Inspection Guide — Before Every Use

- Hard hat:** Check for cracks, dents, fading, or brittleness. Inspect suspension system. Replace after impact.
- Eye protection:** Verify no scratches, cracks, or loose frames. Must be ANSI Z87.1 rated. Clean lenses daily.
- Hearing:** Check earplugs for dirt or hardening. Inspect earmuff cushions for cracks or wear.
- Respirator:** Test seal every time. Check filters, valves, and straps. Replace filters on schedule.
- Gloves:** Inspect for tears, holes, thinning, or chemical breakthrough. Must fit snugly.
- Boots:** Check toe cap, sole integrity, lace condition, and waterproofing. Replace when sole is worn.

Common Mistakes That Cause Injuries

- ✗ Not wearing PPE because "it's just a quick job" — injuries happen in seconds
- ✗ Wearing the wrong type of PPE — chemical gloves don't protect against cuts
- ✗ Wearing damaged or expired PPE — it gives a false sense of protection
- ✗ Not fit-testing respirators — a bad seal means you're breathing in hazards
- ✗ Removing PPE in the hazard zone — even for a moment can cause permanent injury

Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ PPE is the LAST line of defense — eliminate hazards first, then use PPE for remaining risks
- ✓ Inspect every piece of PPE before you put it on — every shift, every time
- ✓ If your PPE doesn't fit, it doesn't protect — request the correct size
- ✓ Store PPE properly — clean, dry, away from sunlight and chemicals
- ✓ When in doubt, wear more protection — you can always remove, you can't undo an injury

Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. What PPE is required for the tasks we're doing today?
2. Is everyone's PPE in good condition and properly fitted?
3. Do we have spare PPE available on site?
4. Has anyone had PPE fail or break during a task recently?
5. Do you know where to get replacement PPE when yours is damaged?

TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: _____ Supervisor: _____

Project: _____ Location: _____

Attendance sheet attached: [] Yes