

Eye Strain & Eye Safety

WHY THIS MATTERS

Approximately 20,000 eye injuries occur in the workplace each year (BLS). OSHA estimates that 90% of eye injuries are preventable with proper eye protection. Beyond physical hazards, digital eye strain from prolonged screen use affects an estimated 50% of computer workers (AAO). Whether you work with screens, chemicals, grinders or in sunlight — your eyes need protection every shift.

20,000

Workplace eye injuries per year (BLS)

90%

Of eye injuries are preventable with proper PPE (OSHA)

50%

Of computer workers report digital eye strain (AAO)

5 Rules for Eye Safety

Every worker must follow these rules to protect their eyes:

- 1 WEAR EYE PROTECTION — ALWAYS**
Safety glasses, goggles or face shields as required by the task. Prescription glasses are NOT safety glasses.
- 2 MATCH PROTECTION TO THE HAZARD**
Grinding = goggles. Chemicals = splash-proof goggles. Welding = proper shade lens. Screens = blue-light filter
- 3 FOLLOW THE 20-20-20 RULE FOR SCREENS**
Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds — reduces digital eye strain.
- 4 FLUSH EYES IMMEDIATELY AFTER EXPOSURE**
Chemical splash = flush with clean water for 15-20 minutes. Know where the eyewash station is.
- 5 INSPECT EYE PROTECTION BEFORE USE**
Scratched, cracked or pitted lenses reduce visibility — replace damaged eyewear immediately.

Before You Start — Quick Checklist

- Are you wearing the correct eye protection for this task?
- Are your safety lenses free of scratches and cracks?
- Do you know where the nearest eyewash station is?
- If on screens: is your monitor at arm's length and eye level?
- Are you using the 20-20-20 rule for screen breaks?
- Is your work area properly lit — not too bright, not too dim?

Types of Eye Hazards

Flying Particles: Grinding, drilling, chipping, sawing — safety glasses with side shields or goggles required.

Chemical Splash: Acids, solvents, cleaning agents — splash-proof chemical goggles required. Flush 15–20 min if exposed.

Welding Arc: UV and IR radiation cause arc eye (photokeratitis) — use proper shade lens per ANSI Z87.1.

Digital Eye Strain: Blurred vision, headaches, dry eyes from screens — 20-20-20 rule, proper lighting, blink often.

UV/Sun Exposure: Outdoor workers risk cataracts and macular degeneration — UV-blocking safety glasses or sunglasses.

Dust and Debris: Wind, sweeping, demolition send particles airborne — goggles seal around the eyes for full protection.

Common Mistakes That Cost Vision

- ✗ Wearing regular glasses instead of safety glasses — regular lenses shatter on impact
- ✗ Removing goggles "just for a second" while grinding — one particle is all it takes
- ✗ Not knowing where the eyewash station is — seconds matter with chemical exposure
- ✗ Ignoring screen breaks — eye strain compounds over hours and causes chronic headaches

Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ Put on eye protection BEFORE starting the task — not after the first spark flies
- ✓ If chemicals splash your eyes, flush for 15–20 minutes with clean water — don't stop early
- ✓ For screens: arm's length, top of monitor at eye level, reduce glare, and blink consciously
- ✓ Replace scratched or pitted safety lenses — damaged lenses reduce visibility and weaken protection

Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. Where is the nearest eyewash station on our site?
2. Are all team members wearing the correct eye protection for their tasks?
3. Has anyone experienced eye strain from screen work? What helps?
4. When was the last time you replaced your safety glasses?
5. What would you do if a chemical splashed in your eyes right now?

TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Project: _____

Location: _____

Attendance sheet attached: [] Yes