

# Eye and Face Protection

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Every day, about 2,000 U.S. workers suffer eye injuries on the job. These injuries cost over \$924 million annually in workers' compensation and nearly \$4 billion in lost productivity (BLS). Most eye injuries are preventable with proper protection.

**2,000**

Eye injuries per day  
in U.S. workplaces (OSHA)

**\$924M**

Annual workers' comp  
costs from eye injuries (BLS)

**90%**

Of eye injuries  
preventable with PPE (BLS)

## 5 Rules for Eye and Face Protection

Every worker exposed to eye or face hazards must follow these rules:

**1**

### WEAR THE RIGHT PROTECTION

Match PPE to the hazard: safety glasses for impact, goggles for chemicals and dust, face shields for grinding and splashes, welding helmets for arc welding.

**2**

### ALWAYS USE SIDE SHIELDS

OSHA requires side protection when flying objects are present. Regular prescription glasses are NOT safety glasses — side shields alone on dress glasses are not enough.

**3**

### INSPECT BEFORE EACH USE

Check lenses for cracks, scratches, and pitting. Damaged lenses reduce visibility and weaken impact resistance. Replace immediately if defective.

**4**

### ENSURE PROPER FIT

PPE must fit snugly without gaps. Loose goggles allow splash entry, oversized glasses slip and leave eyes exposed. Prescription wearers need Rx-rated safety glasses or OTG goggles.

**5**

### KNOW YOUR HAZARDS

Identify all eye hazards before starting work: flying particles, chemical splashes, dust, molten metal, UV/IR radiation, and laser beams each require specific protection.

## Before You Start — Quick Checklist

- Are all eye/face hazards identified for this task?
- Is the correct type of eye protection selected for the hazard?
- Do all safety glasses have side shields where required?
- Are lenses free of cracks, scratches, and damage?
- Do all welders have proper shade filter lenses?
- Is an emergency eyewash station accessible within 10 seconds?

## Protection Selection Guide — Match to Hazard

**Impact:** Flying particles, chips, dust — use ANSI Z87.1 safety glasses with side shields. For severe impact, use goggles.

**Chemical:** Splashes, fumes, vapors — use chemical splash goggles (indirect vent). Add a face shield for full coverage.

**Dust:** Fine particles, woodworking, grinding — use dust goggles with indirect ventilation to keep particles out.

**Welding:** Arc welding, cutting, brazing — use welding helmet with proper shade filter per OSHA Table E-1.

**Radiation:** UV, IR, laser beams — use filter lenses rated for the specific wavelength and optical density required.

**Heat:** Molten metal, furnace work — use face shield with chin guard over safety goggles for full splash protection.

### Common Mistakes That Cause Blindness

- ✗ Using regular prescription glasses instead of ANSI Z87.1-rated safety glasses
- ✗ Removing safety glasses 'for just a second' — most injuries happen in that moment
- ✗ Using scratched or damaged lenses that reduce visibility and impact protection
- ✗ Wearing safety glasses without side shields near grinding or drilling operations
- ✗ Not knowing the location of the nearest emergency eyewash station

### Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ Look for the ANSI Z87.1 marking on all safety eyewear — if unmarked, it is not rated
- ✓ Keep a spare pair of safety glasses on site — don't skip protection because one pair broke
- ✓ Clean lenses with soap and water or lens cleaner — never use solvents or rough cloth
- ✓ Know your eyewash station location and test it weekly — you have 10 seconds to reach it
- ✓ Face shields are secondary protection — always wear safety glasses or goggles underneath

## Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. What eye hazards exist in our current work area?
2. Is everyone wearing the correct eye protection for their task?
3. When was the last time you inspected your safety glasses?
4. Where is the nearest emergency eyewash station?
5. Has anyone had a near-miss eye injury on this site?

### TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance sheet attached: [ ] Yes