



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is designed for your well-being. You can think of PPE as personal life-saving equipment because every day, it prevents serious, life-threatening injuries and untimely deaths for the workers who wear it and maintain it properly. PPE is available for your head, eyes, hands, lungs, hearing, feet, and more.

**Hard hats** protect your head from injury. Each is designed to absorb shock and protect you from blows to the head. Type I hats protect against impacts from above. Type II hats also provide protection from side impacts. Some hats (Classes E&G) are designed to protect you from electrocution if your head comes close to or touches a live conductor. Make sure you have the right kind of hard hat for the work that you do. Don't be hardheaded. Wear your hard hat.

**Safety glasses, goggles, and face shields** protect your eyes and your eyesight. They can fend off flying fragments of concrete, particles of sawdust, and metal shavings. Safety glasses work best if they are equipped with side shields. Splash-proof goggles prevent liquids from getting into damaging your eyes. Full-face shields can be worn for work like grinding and they provide you with a larger protective barrier over your entire face.

**Gloves** provide hand and finger protection. They can be made of cloth, leather, wire mesh, cut-proof fiber, vinyl, or rubber. Some gloves protect you from extreme temperatures. Like all other PPE, gloves only protect you if you're wearing them. Make sure that you have the right gloves to protect your hands from the hazards you face.

**Respirators** prevent hazardous chemicals from entering your respiratory tract. Some are half-face masks while others cover your entire face. Some require you to carry a supply of air with you, like the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Respirators keep you from inhaling materials that could cause immediate death or long-term disability.

**Hearing protection** includes earplugs and earmuffs. Each device has a noise reduction rating (NRR). Hearing damage is cumulative and can happen over many years. Make sure the NRR is sufficient for the noise levels you're exposed to.

**Safety footwear** protects you from puncture wounds to the bottom of your feet and crushing injuries to your toes. Find a pair that is comfortable since you spend much of your shift on your feet.



**Other kinds of PPE** might be needed for certain tasks, like aprons to protect your torso or gators to protect your shins. Whatever type of PPE is required for you to complete your work safely, be sure that it fits comfortably and that it is in good condition. Clean and maintain personal protective equipment according to the manufacturers' directions. If it gets damaged, stop using it and get it replaced. Always remember: PPE only works when you wear it.

### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**If you notice that any of your co-workers aren't wearing their personal protective equipment, kindly remind them. You could prevent a serious and painful injury.**