Section B.4
University of South Carolina Health and Safety Guide
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Introduction

Personal protective equipment (PPE) includes all types of equipment used to increase individual safety while performing potentially hazardous tasks. This may include safety glasses, hard hats, gloves, lab coats, respirators, or any equipment used to protect against injury or illness.

Scope and Application

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires PPE to be provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition wherever hazards of processes or environment, chemical hazards, radiological hazards, or mechanical irritants are encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or illness through absorption, inhalation, or physical contact. Departments are responsible for ensuring the adequacy of the equipment and ensuring that it is properly maintained, even in those cases where employees provide their own PPE.

Program Description

Engineering controls that eliminate the hazard at the source and do not rely on the worker's behavior for their effectiveness offer the best and most reliable means of protection. Therefore, engineering controls are the first choice for eliminating workplace hazards. Whenever engineering controls are not available or are not fully capable of providing protection, the worker must wear personal protective equipment.

Hazard Assessment and Equipment Selection

Departments must assess their workplaces to identify hazards requiring the use of PPE. Equipment should be selected to provide protection against the hazards identified during the assessment. The hazard assessment must be certified in writing. Assistance with performing the PPE hazard assessment is available through the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS).

Eye and Face Protection

Appropriate eye and face protection, such as safety glasses, goggles, and face shields, must be used to protect against the hazards associated with flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, acids and caustic liquids, chemical gases and vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation.
Head Protection

A protective helmet (hard hat) must be worn when working in areas where there is the potential for injury from falling objects or exposed energized electrical conductors that could contact the head.

Foot Protection

Protective footwear must be worn in areas where there is the potential for foot injuries from falling or rolling objects, from objects piercing the sole, or from exposed energized electrical conductors that could contact the feet.

Hand Protection

Hand protection must be worn to protect against hazards of skin absorption of harmful substances, severe cuts or lacerations, severe abrasions, punctures, chemical burns, thermal burns, or harmful temperature extremes.

Respiratory Protection

Respiratory protection may be used to protect against inhalation hazards when engineering and administrative controls are not feasible or adequate. See Section C.12, Respiratory Protection, for additional information.

Training

Each worker required to use PPE must receive training in the following:

- how to properly wear PPE
- what types of PPE provide protection against the hazards identified during the assessment
- when PPE must be used; the proper care and useful life of PPE proper disposal of damaged PPE

The department must certify in writing that workers have received and understood this training. Training assistance is available through EHS.

Roles and Responsibilities

Department

- Conduct workplace hazard assessment.
• Select PPE appropriate to the hazard identified during the assessment.
• Provide PPE to workers.
• Train workers in elements of PPE use.
• Maintain certifications of hazard assessment and training.
• Provide at no cost to the employee all appropriate PPE

Supervisors

• Ensure workers understand training on PPE.
• Ensure workers use PPE when needed.

EHS

• Provide assistance in conducting a workplace hazard assessment.
• Provide assistance in PPE selection.
• Provide assistance in developing worker training.
• Conduct periodic audits of PPE program.

Individual

• Attend training.
• Use PPE when necessary.

For More Information

• Contact the Employee Safety Manager at 777-5269.

• Sample forms for the completion and certification of the hazard assessment and training are available through EHS.

• A Personal Protective Equipment Self-Audit Checklist is available through EHS.