

All PPE clothing and equipment must be of safe design and construction and be maintained in a clean and reliable fashion. Fit and comfort of PPE should be taken into consideration when selecting personal protective equipment.

- Most protective devices are available in multiple sizes and each employee should be provided with the proper size.
- If several different types of PPE are worn together, make sure everything is compatible.
- If PPE does not fit properly, it can make the difference between being safely covered or dangerously exposed. PPE may not provide the level of protection needed on the job, especially if employees are not wearing it when they should because it is uncomfortable.



OSHA requires that many categories of PPE meet or be equivalent to standards approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

- PPE that is designed for eye, face, head, and foot protection must meet ANSI standards.
- Any employee-owned PPE used in the workplace must conform to the employer's criteria based on the hazard assessment, OSHA requirements, and ANSI standards.

Eye protection is required when employees may be exposed to hazards from projectiles, chemicals, radiation, or in any other on the job situations which have the potential to cause injury to the eyes. Sometimes, face protection may also be required.

- Eye and face protection selected for employee use must clearly identify the manufacturer. Any new eye and face protective equipment must comply with ANSI standards or be at least as effective as the standard requires.

Selecting suitable eye and face protection should take into consideration the following elements:

- Adequately protects against specific workplace hazards
- Fits properly and is reasonably comfortable to wear
- Allows for unrestricted vision and movement
- Equipment is durable and cleanable
- Does not restrict the functioning of any other required PPE



Common types of eye and face protection include safety glasses, safety glasses with side shields, safety goggles, laser safety goggles, welding shields, and face shields.

- Each type of PPE is designed to protect against specific hazards. It is important that the correct protection is selected for the hazards presented at the worksite.

In addition to selecting protective headgear that meets ANSI standard requirements, employees should wear hard hats that provide appropriate protection against potential workplace hazards.

- Class A hard hats provide impact and penetration resistance along with limited voltage protection (up to 2,200 volts).
- Class B hard hats provide the highest level of protection against electrical hazards, with high-voltage shock and burn protection (up to 20,000 volts). They also provide protection from impact and penetration hazards by flying/falling objects.
- Class C hard hats provide lightweight comfort and impact protection but offer no protection from electrical hazards.
- Bump hats are designed for use in areas with low head clearance and are recommended for areas where protection is needed from head bumps and lacerations. These are not designed to protect against falling or flying objects and are not ANSI approved.



When noise is a concern at work, evaluate the noise levels to determine the required Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) of hearing protection devices, ensuring they are adequate to reduce exposure to below OSHA's permissible exposure limit of 85 decibels (A-weighted) over an 8-hour shift.

- Choose hearing protection devices that are comfortable for long-term wear and compatible with other PPE being used, like hard hats, safety glasses, and face shields, to ensure full protection and compliance.

All ANSI-approved footwear has a protective toe and offers impact and compression protection, but the type and amount of protection is not always the same.

- Employees who face possible foot or leg injuries from falling or rolling objects or from crushing or penetrating materials should wear protective footwear.
- When work involves exposure to hot substances or corrosive or poisonous materials employees must have protective gear to cover exposed body parts, including their legs and feet.
- If an employee's feet may be exposed to electrical hazards, non-conductive footwear should be worn.
- Workplace exposure to static electricity may necessitate the use of conductive footwear.



If body protection is required, protective clothing should not pose a greater risk than the one being addressed. Examples of body protection include lab coats, aprons, vests, coveralls, and full body suits.

- Avoid loose clothing that could snag in moving parts and avoid excessive clothing that could result in reduced mobility or heat exhaustion.
- If full body protection is required because there may be exposure to toxic substances or harmful physical agents carefully inspect the PPE before each use, ensuring that it fits properly, isn't damaged, and functions as intended.



It is important to select hand protection designed for the tasks and hazards that may be encountered because gloves designed for one function may not protect against all hazards at the worksite.

- Heavy leather or metal mesh gloves may provide protection against cuts, abrasions, and lacerations, but they can also greatly reduce dexterity, possibly leading to a higher frequency of the mishaps they are intended to protect against.

Consider these factors when selecting protective gloves:

- Type(s) of chemicals handled
- Nature of contact (total immersion, splash, etc.) and duration of contact
- Area requiring protection (hand only, forearm, arm)
- Grip requirements (dry, wet, oily)
- Thermal protection
- Size and comfort
- Abrasion and resistance requirements



For hand protection, there is no ANSI standard for gloves, but OSHA recommends that selection be based on the tasks to be performed and the performance and construction characteristics of the glove material.

- For protection against chemicals, glove selection must be based on the chemicals encountered, the chemical resistance and the physical properties of the glove material.

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