

PPE FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

EYE PROTECTION

This talk addresses common eye hazards and the proper use of eye protection for construction workers.

Materials to have on hand:

- Tools used at the worksite that could cause eye injuries
- The types of eye protection used at your worksite

Items for attendees to consider during the talk:

- What types of jobs at the worksite have eye injury risks?
- What types of eye protection should you use for your type of work?

TALK

A 26-year-old construction worker was using a hammer to strike nails into a concrete wall at a jobsite in Maryland. When a nail rebounded, it struck the man in his eye. Emergency services took him to the hospital. He underwent laser eye surgery, but the accident unfortunately impaired the worker's vision. As with most eye injuries at construction sites, this incident could have been prevented if the worker had been wearing the proper personal protective equipment, or PPE.

The risks

The construction industry has one of the highest eye injury rates in the country because of the dangerous



nature of our work. Hammering, sawing, grinding, sanding, and masonry work can create flying particles of dust, metal, wood, drywall, and cement that can get in your eyes. Wet or powdered cement can cause chemical burns, and nails can become projectiles if you're using hammers or nail guns. Chemicals can splash in your eyes if improperly handled, and welding can cause eye injuries from heat, glare, sparks, splashing metals, arcs, and ultraviolet radiation. Even seemingly minor eye injuries from any of these hazards can cause lifelong vision problems.

If you use the proper eye protection, however, you can significantly reduce your risk of eye injuries as you work around our jobsite.

Types of eye protection

We will give you the right type of eye protection for your job, but you should be familiar with your options. Be sure to ask your supervisor if you are ever unsure about what type of eye protection to use.

Safety glasses. Use safety glasses with side protection to protect against flying particles or objects from jobs like sawing, hammering, and drilling.

Wear safety glasses with shaded filter lenses to protect against harmful light radiation, such as during welding. Safety glasses used in torch soldering must have a shade number between 1.5 and 3 on the lens. Gas or arc welding requires shade 4 or higher.

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Talk Date: _____

Location: _____

Supervisor/

Presenter: _____

Attendees: _____

Comments: _____

PPE FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Goggles. Goggles will give you greater protection from flying particles or objects, chemical splashes, and light radiation. Use them if you are sawing, chipping, grinding, doing masonry work, using a nail gun, pouring cement, working with chemicals, or welding.

Goggles for splash or high dust protection should have indirect venting. Goggles with direct venting, which is a mesh of small holes around the sides, tend to fog up less, but they should not be used with liquid or fine dust hazards.

If you are using goggles for welding, make sure they are the proper shade number. The shade number will be marked on the lens and shows how dark the lens is.

Face shields. Use face shields to protect your eyes and face from splashes, hot slag, sparks, high temperatures, light radiation, flying debris, and molten metals when spraying, chipping, grinding, or welding. Always wear face shields over safety glasses or goggles.

Prescription lenses. Prescription safety glasses, safety goggles designed to fit over eyeglasses, or protective goggles with mounted corrective lenses may be appropriate if you need corrective eyewear. Make sure to let us know if you need this type of equipment. We don't recommend wearing contact lenses if you will be exposed to dust, hazardous liquids or vapors, or high temperatures, and we won't allow you to wear contact lenses if you will be exposed to harmful materials or light flashes unless medically approved.

Using your eye protection

Properly wearing and caring for your eye protection is critical if you want it to work. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Eye protection should always fit comfortably; it shouldn't pinch your nose or put pressure on your head. Make sure there are no gaps that would allow hazards in.
- Eyewear shouldn't distort or block your vision. If you are experiencing dizziness or headaches from wearing it, let us know, and we can provide you with another style or brand.
- Remember to put your eye protection on before being exposed to a hazard. This may seem obvious, but many eye injuries occur each year because workers forget to put on their PPE before starting a job.
- Keep your eye protection clean by washing it regularly with soap and water or with special cleaning products. Regular cleaning helps make sure that your vision is not blocked or blurred. If you are exposed to dust or hazardous liquids while wearing goggles, make sure to clean off the top rim of the goggles before removing them. This prevents dust or liquid from dripping or falling into your eyes when you take them off.
- Throw your protective eyewear away if it is scratched or otherwise damaged because it may not fit correctly, distort your vision, or provide inadequate protection.

If you follow these simple steps and make a habit of wearing your eye protection, you can save your sight and prevent needless injuries.

