

PPE: OSHA's Top 5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Violations

5-Minute Talk

Overview of Topic

OSHA requires the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce your employees' exposure to hazards at your jobsites. You are required analyze each jobsite to determine all exposures to hazards. Then you must decide if engineering or administrative controls, the first line of defense, is feasible or effective in reducing exposures to acceptable levels. If not, PPE must be used.

This 5 Minute lesson gives you the opportunity to share with your employees the top five PPE violations that OSHA inspectors constantly find not being followed—or followed incorrectly—at construction jobsites. Sharing these top 5, and ensuring they are followed correctly and consistently, will instill the notion that you are concerned about safety and your employees welfare.

#1 Head protection—When your employees work in areas where there is a possible danger of head injury from impact, or from falling or flying objects, or from electrical shock and burns, they must be protected by hard hats. (§1926.100(a)). This is currently the 3rd most cited construction regulation.

#2 Eye and face protection—Your employees must be provided with eye and face protection equipment when machines or operations present potential eye or face injury. Injury can come from physical, chemical, or radiation agents. (§1926.102(a)(1)). This is currently the 25th most cited construction regulation.

#3 Protective equipment—Personal protective equipment (PPE), including PPE for eyes, face, head, and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields and barriers, must be provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition whenever it is necessary by reason of hazards of processes or environment, chemical hazards, radiological hazards, or mechanical irritants encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or impairment in the function of any part of the body through absorption, inhalation, or physical contact. (§1926.95(a))

#4 Safety nets—Safety nets must be provided when workplaces are more than 25 feet above the ground or water surface, or other surfaces where the use of ladders, scaffolds, catch platforms, temporary floors, safety lines, or safety belts is impractical. (§1926.105(a))



#5 Employer responsibility—You are responsible for ensuring your employees are wearing appropriate PPE in all operations where: (1) there is an exposure to hazardous conditions, and (2) the OSHA construction regulations indicate the need for using PPE to reduce hazards to your employees. An example of this would be the OSHA requirement for respirators during certain asbestos operations. (§1926.28(a))

Employee Training

The OSHA rules require the following training for employees using personal protective equipment. Employees must:

- Be trained to recognize and avoid unsafe conditions at their worksites.
- Understand the regulations applicable to their work environment, to control or eliminate the hazards.

For employees that use respirators, training requirements for respirators are found in either the new respiratory standard at §1910.134 or in the OSHA specific contaminants rules, i.e., the lead or asbestos standard.

Training Tips

This 5 Minute lesson is designed to give supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss those OSHA rules that are the most violated by construction contractors.

This will be a good time to go over your company's policy in regards to the wearing of personal protective equipment.

Where To Go For More Information

Construction regulatory text: §1926.28—Personal protective equipment.

Construction regulatory text: §1926, Subpart E—Personal protective and life saving equipment.

General industry regulatory text: §1910.134—Respiratory protection.

