

STAY SAFE BULLETIN

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Eye Protection

The Issue

Employers are generally required to conduct Hazard Assessments. If the hazard assessment indicates that PPE is required to control hazards, then the employer must make sure that employees wear and use the PPE properly. Using PPE “properly” includes such responsibilities as:

- Maintaining PPE according to manufacturer and/or legislated standards.
- Training in the correct use, care and limitations of the PPE.
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Context

Eye injuries at work are very common:

- Every day an estimated 1,000 eye injuries occur in NA.
- With proper eyewear, 90 percent of these injuries could be prevented.
- Approximately 5 percent of eye injuries will result in lost work time.

Most workplaces need to consider eye protection for their day to day activities.

How Eye Hazards are Encountered at the Workplace

Without a current, relevant and reviewed Hazard Assessment there is no basis upon which to determine what eye protection might be needed. PPE requirements are identified by performing Hazard Assessments.

Some eye hazard types include: flying objects, flying particles, heat, sparks & molten splash, chemical burns, abrasive blasting, glare, stray light and optical radiation.

Effects of Eye Injuries

First aid for many eye injuries is very specific and requires planning based on your hazard assessment. Examples of some common first aid for eye injuries: Specks in the eye: Do not rub the eye. Flush the eye with large amounts of water. See a doctor if the speck does not wash out or if pain or redness continues.

Cuts, punctures, and foreign objects in the eye: do not wash out the eye. Do not try to remove a foreign object stuck in the eye. Seek immediate medical attention.

Chemical Burns: Immediately flush the eye with water or any drinkable liquid. Open the eye as wide as possible. Continue flushing for at least 15 minutes. For caustic or basic solutions, continue flushing while on the way to medical care.

A general first aid plan for eye injuries, where specific hazards have been identified or should have been identified, is not sufficient. You may be exposing your injured workers to eye damage and your company to legal liability by not having a specific first aid plan in place.

Controlling the Hazard of Eye Injury - PPE

Whether it is the glare from a photocopier, pouring household cleaners, being outside on a windy day or cutting and grinding; the risk of eye injury must be controlled.

*“Watch your thoughts;
They become words”*

*“Watch your words;
They become actions”*

*“Watch your actions;
They become habits”*

*“Watch your habits;
They become
character”*

*“Watch your
character; It becomes
your destiny”*