

Tool Box Talk

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

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Worksites today generally are safer than ever, thanks largely to the widespread use of PPE designed to keep workers safe and injury free. PPE is the equipment you the worker wear to reduce exposure to hazards: however PPE should be the last line of defense. All methods of controlling hazards, including elimination, substitution, development of practices and procedures and engineering, which could includes machine guards, and enclosing the worker in a protective room should be attempted before PPE is selected.

If PPE is going to be the protection of choice then what should we be looking for?

Eye Protection

There is no such thing as a second chance when it comes to accidents involving your eyes. That is why it is important to select the right type of eye and face protection. They are designed for protection against different hazards. Whatever type of eye protection you select it is important to wear it all the time. Examine your eye wear regularly and before the start of each work day and ensure it is clean and free from scratches that could hamper your view. (OH&S Regulations Sect 93)



Foot Protection

Proper safety footwear can help you avoid twists and strains, prevent slips and protect your feet from falling objects and boot punctures. Pick your foot protection according to the specific task you are doing and hazard you may encounter. Approved safety footwear will have the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) green triangle on the side or tongue of the boot or shoe. Inspect your footwear regularly to ensure it continues to provide traction and protection for your feet. (OH&S Regulations Sect 96)

Head Protection

Hardhats are standard issue or required on all worksites in the construction industry. To work properly they must be fitted securely on the top of the head and bands adjusted to ensure the suspension system distributes the load evenly over the entire head. Best industry practice is to wear the hardhat with the brim facing forward. Safety

headwear must be inspected regularly prior to use and should be replaced when the suspension system is worn or the shell is punctured, split or cracked. (OH&S Regulations Sect 91)

Hearing Protection

Exposure to excessive noise may create permanent hearing loss. To protect yourself wear hearing protection that is appropriate to the task.

This may include foam earplugs to ear muffs or both. Ensure that you wear your hearing protection as the manufacturer requires. Not paying attention to how it is inserted, maintained and used could harm your hearing and damage your ear canal. Remember, just because you could be exposed to noise for a short period, long term exposure to that same noise may harm your hearing. (OH&S Regulations Sect 99)

Specialized PPE

Every trade has its own hazards. Specialized PPE may be required for some of those hazards. This may include a form of respiratory protection, which could include a simple dust mask to a self contained breathing system. Hand wear could be required as you may be handling toxic chemicals to using a knife. Special clothing may have to be worn because you could be exposed to high temperatures or flames. Educate yourself to the hazards you could be exposed to and use the proper PPE when required.

PPE are essential parts of a hazard control system. The use of PPE must be supported by a PPE program which assures that the protection actually performs as intended and that the workers who have to wear it can use it effectively in their work activities.

OH&S REGULATIONS PART VII

Personal Protective Equipment

Sect 86 (1) (2) Use of equipment required states; Where it is not reasonably practicable to protect the health and safety of workers by design of the plant and work processes, suitable work practices or administrative controls, an employer or contractor shall ensure that every worker wears or uses suitable and adequate personal protective equipment, and further states; Where personal protective equipment will not effectively protect a worker, an employer or contractor shall, where reasonably practicable, provide alternative work arrangements for that worker. **Sect 87 General responsibilities** lays out the responsibilities of an employer or contractor to their workers in regards to the supply, use, care and maintenance of PPE at the worksite.



SASKATCHEWAN
CONSTRUCTION SAFETY
ASSOCIATION



REGINA OFFICE | 498 HENDERSON DRIVE | REGINA SK S4N 6E3 | T:306.525.0175 | F: 306.525.1542
SASKATOON OFFICE | 2606 KOYL AVENUE | SASKATOON SK S7L 5X9 | T: 306.652.0907 | F: 306.652.0923

WWW.SCSAONLINE.CA

