

# **SAFE WORK PRACTICE**

## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

### **Purpose**

To provide guidelines on the use personal protective equipment.

### **General**

When a hazard cannot be removed or controlled adequately, personal protective equipment must be used. The employer will supply all necessary PPE including safety headgear, eye protection, ear protection, respiratory protection, personal floatation devices, foot guards, leggings, fall arresting devices and other specialized devices where the use is required. Employees must supply safety footwear and normal environmental clothing.

### **Hearing Protection**

Noise is unwanted sound. It can be annoying or harmful if the sound is loud and if the worker is exposed to it long enough. Noise is the most common occupational health hazard. Permanent hearing loss is the main concern. Noise can be controlled by engineering controls in a controlled environment such as an office or shop. In some cases the only choice is wearing hearing protection. Outdoor worksites with heavy machinery or construction cannot control noise except through the use of PPE.

To prevent hearing loss employees must wear suitable hearing protection when in noisy environments. The two types of hearing protection are;

- Ear plugs, disposable or semi-permanent, need to be inserted in the ear canal properly to be effective. They may irritate the ear canal and if taken out and replaced may transfer dirt to the ear and cause an infection. Ear plugs need to be used according to the manufacturers directions.
- Ear muffs, offer better protection but are heavier, less portable and inconvenient if other PPE must be worn, safety headgear for instance.
- There may be times when both forms of protection must be worn to ensure adequate protection.

## **Eye protection**

Safety eyewear is necessary when there is a hazard to the eyes. This may be where a worker is watching a process or other operation where objects may fly and strike the worker. Safety eyewear can be in the form of glasses, goggles or face shields;

- General safety eyeglasses are effective for flying object type of hazards. All eye protection should have side shields to prevent objects coming from an oblique angle striking the eyes.
- Safety goggles offer the same protection as safety eyeglasses for workers who need to wear corrective eyeglasses. Regular prescription eyewear does not offer any protection against flying objects and adds the additional risk of shattering and creating another hazard of injury.
- Chemical safety goggles enclose the eyes and prevent liquids from touching the eyes.
- Face shields protect the whole face as well as the eyes. Face shields are recommended when performing tasks such as grinding and should be worn in conjunction with safety glasses.

Safety headgear shall be worn when there is a hazard of injury to the head. This could be indoors or outdoors, depending on the circumstance. Safety headgear must be in good repair and Canadian Standards Association (CSA) approved for the type of hazard at the worksite. There are liners for safety headgear for use in cold weather conditions.

## **Safety footwear**

Employees may, in the course of their duties, be required to visit worksites where the wearing of safety footwear is mandatory. Safety footwear must be CSA approved for the hazard. Safety footwear may be needed in winter or under wet conditions.

## **Safety reflective vests (traffic vests)**

Employees may find it necessary to visit worksites where there are moving vehicles or equipment. Safety vests must be maintained in good condition to be effective. Do not wear a vest which is faded, excessively worn or dirty. These factors will decrease your visibility to operators of moving vehicles or other traffic hazards.

## **Respirators / dust masks**

Employees may in the course of their duties visit worksite areas where respiratory protection is required. Employees not trained in the proper use of respirators will not enter any area where respiratory protection is required. Dust /mist masks are only to be used for protection against particles, for instance in a carpenter shop using a dust mask to keep wood dust out of the respiratory tract.

If a situation requires a respirator, a dust/mist mask is not adequate and improper use could endanger your health. See the safe work practice on chemical hazards in the workplace.

### **Chain saws**

- Employees who must use chain saws in the course of their employment shall wear the following personal protective equipment;
- Safety Headgear
- Hearing protection
- Eye protection
- Leg protection
- Hand protection of a type to reduce the effects of vibration

### **Fall arrest equipment**

Employees working where fall arrest equipment is required by OHS regulation shall conform to the applicable regulation. Board employees required to wear fall arrest equipment shall be familiar with General Safety Regulations 15 and 16.

### **Hand protection**

Hand protection may include gloves, mittens, creams or ointments. Glove and mittens can be leather, fabric, rubber or vinyl. The material will depend of the type of protection needed. Protection against abrasion, flying particles or the weather may require leather or fabric hand protection. Chemical protection could be rubber or vinyl depending on what is required by the available M.S.D.S. Hand cream or ointments should be used for an inadvertent exposure to chemicals. The ointment should be appropriate for the chemical.

### **Specialized PPE**

Employees who are required to visit worksites where it may be necessary to wear specialized equipment, such as **S**elf **C**ontained **B**reathing **A**pparatus (SCBA), will require training before using such equipment. Employees are not to use PPE until they have received proper training in the use of the equipment.