

EYE HAZARDS: KEYS TO REDUCING THE RISKS

Proper PPE and worksite awareness will keep you safe

With around 2,000 workplace eye injuries occurring every day, using proper protection is a must.

KNOW THE DANGERS

Even seemingly minor eye injuries can lead to serious problems, like painful corneal erosion.

Common eye hazards include:

- hammering, grinding, sanding, masonry or other dust-producing work
- using chemicals that could splash in your eye
- welding arcs and flashes
- dusty or windy conditions
- walking through a work area
- smoke and noxious gases
- wet or powdered cement, which can cause a chemical burn
- falling or moving debris, building materials and glass, and
- bloodborne pathogens.

WHAT WORKS

Different types of work require specific kinds of eye protection.

Here are some options:

- **Safety glasses:** Look for glasses with side protection, anti-fogging treatment and a retainer to hold them tight on your face.
- **Hybrid glasses:** Find a pair with foam or rubber around the lenses to keep flying particles out.
- **Goggles:** An indirect-venting pair will protect you from splashes, while a direct-venting pair will fog less. Wear tight-fitting goggles in dusty areas.

Face shields: Use tinted or metal-coated shields for heat and splatter protection. Always wear safety glasses or goggles underneath.

- **Full facepiece respirators:** Use these when you need respiratory protection, but check to be sure yours is compliant with the American National Standards Institute's eye and face protection standard, Z87.1. Note that full face piece respirators don't seal over safety glasses. When using a half-mask respirator, ensure it doesn't affect the chosen eye protection.

SAFETY STEPS

Protecting your eyes at work goes well beyond simply putting on the right PPE.

Here's how you can prevent eye injuries while on the job, according to the National Institute for Occupational Good Safety and Health:

- **Make your work environment safe.** Reduce hazards from falling or unstable debris, ensure tools work correctly and that workers have been trained to use them properly, and keep bystanders out of hazardous areas.

- **Identify safety hazards on site.**

These may include any from nearby workers, machinery, or falling and shifting debris.

- **Use proper eye and face protection.** Choose the best Z87.1-compliant eye protection for your job. Before use, check to ensure the PPE is in good condition and that it fits properly.

- **Use safe work practices.**

Remove dust and debris from your hard hat, hair, forehead and the top of your eye protection before removing the PPE. Also remember not to rub your eyes with dirty hands or clothing, and clean off your eyewear on a regular basis.

- **Be ready for injuries.** Always keep an eyewash station or sterile eye washing solution on site in case of an injury.

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Training Shop Quiz

True or False

1. Depending on the industry you're in, simply walking through a work area can expose you to dangerous eye hazards.
2. When it comes to eye protection, a simple pair of safety glasses will work just fine.
3. Getting a minor eye injury on the job can usually be treated quickly.
4. When using a full face-piece respirator, you must check to make sure it is fully compatible with any other eye protection you're wearing.
5. Selecting the proper type of PPE is all you need to do to protect your eyes while you're on the job.
6. Even if you and your co-workers are using proper eye protection all the time, your worksite should still have an eyewash station or solution in case of an emergency.
7. You can get eye injuries from chemicals, smoke, windy conditions and even bloodborne pathogens.
8. Before taking off your eye protection, you should remember to remove and dust or debris that's on you first.
9. Recent statistics show that workers in the United States suffer from close to 2,000 eye injuries each year.
10. You don't need safety glasses or goggles when wearing a face shield.

Training Shop Quiz Answers

1. **True.** You don't have to be doing work to be exposed to the risk.
2. **False.** There is many kind of eye protection for various type of hazard.
3. **False.** Minor eye injuries can lead to complication and infection.
4. **True.** Full face-piece respirator does not seal over safety glasses and half-mask can interfere with glasses or goggles.
5. **False.** Good work practices, knowing how to identified hazard, and training will help to create a healthy and safe working environment.
6. **True.** Equipment can fail or freak accident can happen.
7. **True.** You can get eye injuries from chemicals, smoke, windy conditions and even bloodborne pathogens.
8. **True.** Remove dust or debris before removing you eye protection.
9. **False.** Around 2000 eye injuries occurs every day
10. **False.** You do need safety glasses or goggle to protect your eyes under the face shield.