



Safety Bulletin
July 2024

Personal Protective Equipment-Tool Hazards-Hearing Conservation

Personal Protective Equipment



All PPE clothing and equipment must be of a safe design and construction and be maintained in a clean and reliable fashion. Personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE", is equipment worn by employees to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. These injuries and illnesses may result from contact with chemical, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. Personal protective equipment generally includes items such as gloves, safety glasses,

shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, N-95 masks, coveralls, warning vests, and other PPE as needed for the exposure. Employers are required to assess employee hazards and provide the necessary protective equipment.

All personal protective equipment should be safely designed and constructed and should be maintained in a clean and reliable fashion. It should fit comfortably, encouraging worker use. If the personal protective equipment does not fit properly, it can make the difference between being safely covered or dangerously exposed. When engineering, work practice, and administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide personal protective equipment to their workers and ensure its proper use. Employers are also required to train each worker required to use personal protective equipment to know:

- ✓ When it is necessary,
- ✓ What kind is necessary,
- ✓ How to properly put it on, adjust, wear, and take it off,
- ✓ The limitations of the equipment,
- ✓ Proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of the equipment.

If PPE is to be used, a PPE program should be implemented. The program should address the hazards present; the selection, maintenance, and use of PPE; the training of employees; and monitoring of the program to ensure its ongoing effectiveness. This should be reflected in the employers IIPP. <https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3380.html>

Hand and Power Tools

Basic safety procedures and safeguards associated with hand and portable power tools should be developed for all tools used by employees. Tools are such a common part of our lives that it is difficult to remember that they may pose hazards. Tragically, a serious incident can occur before steps are taken to identify and avoid or eliminate tool-related hazards.



Employees who use hand and power tools and are exposed to the hazards of falling, flying, abrasive, and splashing objects, or to harmful dusts, fumes, mists, vapors, or gases must be provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment. OSHA has identified five basic safety rules that can help prevent hazards associated with the use of hand and power tools:

- ✓ Keep all tools in good condition with regular maintenance.
- ✓ Use the right tool for the job.
- ✓ Examine each tool for damage before use and do not use damaged tools.
- ✓ Operate tools according to the manufacturers' instructions.
- ✓ Provide and use properly the right personal protective equipment.

Remember, the employer is responsible for the safe condition of tools and equipment used by employees. Employees are required to be trained in the proper use and handling of tools and equipment. <https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/sb7g3a20.html>

Hearing Conservation

Hearing conservation programs strive to prevent initial occupational hearing loss, preserve, and protect remaining hearing, and equip workers with the knowledge and hearing protection devices necessary to safeguard themselves. Employers are required to measure noise levels; provide free annual hearing exams, hearing protection, and training; and conduct evaluations of the adequacy of the hearing protectors in use (unless changes made to tools, equipment, and schedules result in worker noise exposure levels that are less than the 85 dBA).



Employers must provide employees with a selection of at least one variety of hearing plug and one variety of hearing muff. Employees should decide, with the help of a person trained to fit hearing protectors, which size and type of protector is most suitable for the working environment.

The protector selected should be comfortable to wear and offer sufficient protection to prevent hearing loss. <https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5097.html>

The Cal OSHA website has several resources available to help employers meet their obligation to have a safe work site for employees. The following link is a good starting point. https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/iipp.html

Employers are required to train workers who are required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) on how to do the following:

- Use protective equipment properly,
- Be aware of when personal protective equipment is necessary,
- Know what kind of protective equipment is necessary,
- Understand the limitations of personal protective equipment in protecting workers from injury,
- Put on, adjust, wear, and take off personal protective equipment, and
- Maintain protective equipment properly.

The ICRMA web-site has sample policies and procedures available to the members.

If you have questions about either of these programs contact Bob May, Director of Loss Control. Phone – 760.221.8205 or biem47@outlook.com