CORRECT PPE USE CHECKLIST

Effective use of PPE relies on understanding the equipment. This includes proper training, selection, handling, maintenance, and inspection. Incorrect PPE use may result in injury or death. The following checklist will help you ensure you are using PPE to avoid injury.

HEAD PROTECTION

Wearing a safety helmet, hard hat, or bump cap can protect the head from contact hazards, dropped objects, and electrical exposure.

- ☐ Have you inspected your hard hat before and after each use?
- ☐ Is it stored out of direct sunlight and where it won't get hit, dented, or damaged?
- ☐ Are you using only mild soaps and warm water to clean it and allowing it to air dry?
- ☐ Are you replacing your hard hat when it has suffered an impact?
- ☐ Do you follow manufacturer instructions before affixing paints, stickers, or decals?

➳ **NOTE:** Hard hats should never be worn backward or with a baseball cap underneath.

EYES AND FACE PROTECTION

Safety glasses with side shields protect the wearer from flying fragments, large chips, sand, and dirt. Safety goggles offer the best protection from chemical splashes and sparks. Face shields provide complete face protection when working with hot materials, chemicals, or light radiation.

- ☐ Do you ensure it is clean and sanitary before use?
- ☐ Have you verified that is has an ANSI Z87.1 marking, including prescription eye protection?
- ☐ Are you experiencing any discomfort including dry or watery eyes, eye soreness, trouble focusing, headaches, nausea, or eye fatigue? If so, you should switch out your eye protection.
- ☐ Do you position eye and face protection so that it doesn't obstruct your field of vision?

➳ **NOTE:** Always wear safety glasses or goggles under your face shield or welding helmet.

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HEARING PROTECTION

Occupational hearing loss is preventable. If engineering and administrative controls cannot reduce noise to acceptable levels, employers must provide hearing protection that includes soft foam earplugs and/or earmuffs.

☐ Have you inspected it for any dirt, debris, cracks, splits, or other visible signs of damage?

☐ Do you check the fit of your earplugs by cupping your hands tightly over your ears? If sounds are more muffled with your hands in place, the earplug may not be sealing correctly.

☐ Have you ensured your earmuffs fully enclose the ears and form a tight seal?

➳ **NOTE:** Encourage workers to use hearing protection outside of work when noise levels are elevated.

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Airborne contaminants that a worker can't see, feel, or smell can damage the lungs and other organs, and oxygen-deficient atmospheres can kill. When ventilation isn't sufficient to control respiratory hazards, appropriate protection is essential.

☐ Do you inspect the respirator before each use, during cleaning, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations?

☐ Do you ensure filters, cartridges and canisters are appropriate for the hazards present?

☐ Have you conducted a seal check every time you wear your respirator to ensure it won't leak?

☐ Have you changed filters according to the employers' change schedule and manufacturer's time-use limitations?

☐ Do you store your respirator in a clean, dry place that protects against damage, contamination, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture, and damaging chemicals?

HAND AND ARM PROTECTION

Gloves protect the wearer against specific hazards, including mechanical, environmental, chemical, and toxic/biological agents. Choose the right type of glove for the work being done.

☐ Do you wash your hands and keep any cuts bandaged before putting gloves on?

☐ Have you inspected them for defects and excessive wear every time you put them on?

☐ Do you ensure the gloves and arm protection properly fits you?

➳ **NOTE:** After handling chemicals, consider gloves as contaminated when removing, follow proper removal procedures, and dispose of in appropriate waste container.

BODY PROTECTION, INCLUDING HI-VIS

Various forms of body protection can shield the worker from hazards such as falls, chemicals, electricity, fire, and bloodborne pathogens. They include arc-rated and flame-resistant clothing; aprons; body suits and harnesses; coveralls; jackets; and welding leathers. High-visibility apparel increases worker visibility from a distance or during inclement weather or poor air quality conditions.

☐ Do you inspect the apparel prior to use and in accordance with manufacturer guidelines?

➳ **NOTE:** Personal fall arrest systems should also be inspected annually by a Competent Person.

☐ Do you ensure high-visibility PPE meets specific ANSI performance class ratings?

☐ Have you replaced body protection when damaged, and in accordance with manufacturer guidelines?

➳ **NOTE:** Replace hi-vis apparel after 25 washes and/or when showing rips/tears, cracks, or damaged reflected striping.

☐ Have you followed manufacturer guidelines when washing body protection, especially arc-rated and flame-resistant clothing?

FOOT AND LEG PROTECTION

Employees who face possible foot or leg injuries from falling or rolling objects, crushing or penetrating materials, exposure to hot substances, corrosive or poisonous materials, or electrical hazards should wear protective footwear.

☐ Do you inspect before each use for wear and tear, including cracks or holes, separation of materials, and broken buckles or laces?

☐ Are you observing any limitations and precautions indicated by the manufacturer and your employer?

☐ Are you following the manufacturers' recommendations for cleaning and maintenance?

☐ Do you replace defective leg and footwear immediately?

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Robin Marth, CSP joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. in 2021 as an Editor on the Environmental, Health & Safety Publishing Team. She is an experienced EHS Specialist with a demonstrated history of working in the management consulting and manufacturing industry. Robin's professional skill set includes Workplace Safety Administration, Ergonomics, Environmental Management, and Motor Vehicle/Fleet Safety. Her editorial responsibilities include researching and creating content for several publications, including *Employee Safety Management Today*. Robin holds a CSP designation from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals and is also an OSHA Outreach General Industry Trainer.

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