

## OSHA COMPLIANCE MANUAL

chemical exposures; sources of harmful dust or light radiation; sources of falling objects or potential for dropping objects; sources of sharp objects which might pierce the feet or cut the hands and rolling or pinching objects which could crush the feet; the layout of workplace and location of co-workers; and any electrical hazards.

Following the walk-through survey, it is necessary to organize the data to prepare an analysis of the hazards to enable proper selection of protective equipment. The employer should analyze the data on the workplace and estimate the potential for injuries. Each of the basic hazards should be reviewed and a determination made as to the type, level of risk, and seriousness of potential injury from each of the hazards found in the area. The possibility of exposure to several hazards simultaneously should be considered.

### Selection Guidelines

After completion of the hazard assessment, the general procedure for selection of protective equipment is to:

1. Become familiar with the potential hazards and the type of protective equipment that is available, and what it can do;
2. Compare the hazards associated with the environment;
3. Select the protective equipment which ensures a level of protection greater than the minimum required to protect employees from the hazards;
4. Fit the user with the protective device and give instructions on care and use of the PPE. It is very important that the users be made aware of all warning labels for and limitations of their PPE.

Careful consideration must be given to comfort and fit. PPE that fits poorly will not afford the necessary protection. Continued wearing of the device is more likely if it fits the wearer comfortably and protective devices are generally available in a variety of sizes.

Adjustments should be made on an individual basis for a comfortable fit that will maintain the protective device in the proper position. Particular care should be taken in fitting devices for eye protection against dust and chemical splashes. In addition, proper fitting of helmets is important to ensure that it will not fall off during work operations.

It is the responsibility of the employer or safety officer to reassess the workplace hazard situation as necessary, to identify and evaluate new equipment and processes, to review accident records, and reevaluate the suitability of previously selected PPE.

### Employee Training

Employers must provide training for each employee who is required to use personal protective equipment. Training should include *when* PPE is necessary; *what* PPE is necessary; *how to wear* PPE; its limitations; the proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of the PPE. Employees must demonstrate an understanding of the training and the ability to use the PPE properly before being allowed to perform work requiring the use of the equipment.

If an employer has reason to believe an employee does not have the understanding or skill required, the employer must retrain. Circumstances where retraining may be required include changes in the workplace or changes in the types of PPE to be used which would render previous training obsolete. Also, inadequacies in an affected employee's knowledge or use of the assigned PPE which indicates that the employee has not retained the necessary understanding or skills. Employers must certify in writing that the employee has received and understands the training.

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If you have reason to believe an employee doesn't have the necessary understanding or skill, you have to retrain. Circumstances where retraining may be required include:

- Changes in the workplace,
- Changes in the types of PPE to be used, or
- Inadequacies in an employee's knowledge or use of the assigned PPE which indicates that the employee doesn't have the necessary understanding or skills.

You must certify in writing that each employee has received and understands the training.

## **Cleaning and maintenance**

It is important that all PPE be kept clean and properly maintained. Cleaning is particularly important for eye and face protection where dirty or fogged lenses could impair vision. PPE should be inspected, cleaned, and maintained at regular intervals so that the PPE provides the requisite protection.

It is also important to ensure that contaminated PPE, which cannot be decontaminated, is disposed of in a manner that protects employees from exposure to hazards.

This chapter discusses those types of personal protective equipment most commonly used for protection of the head, including eyes and ears; the torso; arms and hands; and feet. The use of equipment to protect against life-threatening hazards is also discussed.

## **Employer-paid PPE**

§1910.132(h)

In November 2007, OSHA issued its final rule on employer-paid personal protective equipment. Under the rule, all PPE, with few exceptions, must be provided at no cost to employees. According to OSHA, employers currently pay for 95 percent of employee PPE. But, when employees are responsible to pay for their own PPE, they:

- Are likely to purchase the wrong equipment,
- May use the PPE beyond its expected service life, or
- May avoid purchasing the equipment at all.

When employers pay for PPE, they are more likely to select the right PPE for the hazards present in their workplaces. OSHA has also found that when employers pay for PPE, they make sure the equipment is maintained and replaced as necessary, and generally take more responsibility for PPE selection and use.

## **Who's covered?**

The new rule, which OSHA first proposed in March 1999, affects most of the agency's PPE standards, including Parts:

- 1910 General Industry,
- 1926 Construction,
- 1915 Shipyards,
- 1917 Marine terminals, and
- 1918 Longshoring.

The regulatory text is almost the same for each of the industries. There are only small changes from one industry to the next. For example, the exception for logging boots in the general industry standard is not found in the construction or shipyard standards.