

Personal Protective Equipment
Subpart I
29 CFR 1910.132
Adopted from OSHA Office of Training and Education
PPE/ppe/1-95

Hard hats, goggles, face shields, steel-toed shoes, respirators, aprons, gloves, full body suits! What do all these items have in common? They are all various forms of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Personal protective equipment should **not** be used as a substitute for engineering, work practice, and/or administrative controls. Personal protective equipment should be used in conjunction with these controls to provide for employee safety and health in the workplace. Personal protective equipment includes all clothing and other work accessories designed to create a barrier against workplace hazards. The basic element of any management program for PPE should be an in-depth evaluation of the equipment needed to protect against the hazards at the workplace. Management dedicated to the safety and health of employees should use that evaluation to set a standard operating procedure for personnel, then train employees on the protective limitations of PPE, and on its proper use and maintenance.

Using personal protective equipment requires hazard awareness and training on the part of the user. Employees must be aware that the equipment does not eliminate the hazard. If the equipment fails, exposure will occur. To reduce the possibility of failure, equipment must be properly fitted and maintained in a clean and serviceable condition.

Selection of the proper personal protective equipment for a job is important. Employers and employees must understand the equipment's purpose and its limitations. The equipment must not be altered or removed even though an employee may find it uncomfortable simply because it does not fit properly.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS – 1910.132

Application

This regulation requires employers to ensure that personal protective equipment be “provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition whenever it is necessary.....” to prevent injury. This includes protection of any part of the body from hazards through absorption, inhalation, or physical contact.

For example, many hazards can threaten the torso: heat, splashes from hot metals and liquids, impacts, cuts, acids, and radiation. A variety of protective clothing is available: vests, jackets, aprons, coveralls, and full body suits.

Wool and specially treated cotton are two natural fibers that are fire-resistant, comfortable and adapt well to a variety of workplace temperatures.

Duck, a closely woven cotton fabric, is good for light-duty protective equipment. It can protect against cuts and bruises on jobs where employees handle heavy, sharp, or rough material.

Heat-resistant, material such as leather, is often used in protective clothing to guard against dry heat and flame. Rubber and rubberized fabrics, neoprene, and plastics give protection against some acids and chemicals.

It is important to refer to manufacturer's selection guides for effectiveness of specific materials against specific chemicals.

Disposable suits of plastic-like or similar synthetic material are particularly important for protection from dusty materials or materials that can splash. If the substance is extremely toxic, a completely enclosed chemical suit may be necessary. The clothing should be inspected to ensure proper fit and function for continued protection.

Employee-Owned Equipment

When employees provide their own equipment, the employer shall assure the adequacy, including the proper maintenance and sanitation, of such equipment.

Design

All personal protective equipment must be of safe design and construction for the work to be performed.

Hazard Assessment and Equipment Selection

Employers are required to assess the workplace to determine if hazards that require the use of personal protective equipment are present or are likely to be present. If hazards or the likelihood of hazards are found, employers must select and have affected employees use properly fitted PPE suitable for protection and existing hazards.

Employers must certify in writing that a workplace hazard assessment has been performed.

Defective and Damaged Equipment

Defective or damaged personal protective equipment shall not be used.

Training

Before doing work requiring use of personal protective equipment, employees must be trained to know when personal protective equipment is necessary; what type is necessary; how it is to be worn; and what its limitations are, as well as know its proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal.

Employers are required to certify in writing that training has been carried out and that employees understand it. Each written certification shall contain the name of each employee trained, the date(s) of training, and identify the subject certified.