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Take Care of Your PPE

Choosing the right personal protective equipment is the first step toward ensuring your safety. However, once you've assembled the right combination for your individual needs and the jobs you are required to perform, you are only halfway there. The next step is one that is often overlooked - looking after your PPE. Caring for your PPE is just as essential as choosing the right PPE. Let's start from the top.

Head Protection

Hardhats, helmets and bump caps are designed to protect your head. Inspecting and caring for your head protection is vital. Promptly replace a damaged or defective hardhat.

- ◆ Are the inside straps working properly? Are they properly adjusted? If the inside straps no longer fit, then you are drastically reducing its protective value.
- ◆ Is the outer shell cracked or weakened with dents?
- ◆ Are the chin straps frayed or split compromising their ability to hold the hardhat on your head?
- ◆ Is your hardhat clean? Use a damp rag with mild soap and water to clean your hardhat every couple of days. Mold and mildew can grow on any surface damp with your sweat and can cause allergy problems that can affect your eyesight and ability to breathe freely.

Eye Protection

Wearing safety glasses, goggles or shields to protect your eyesight isn't very effective if they are always slipping down your nose.

- ◆ Do they fit? If not, talk to your supervisor and get a pair that fit properly.
- ◆ Are they clean? Again, using a solution of warm soapy water should do the trick. Clean them as many times a day as necessary.
- ◆ Are they cracked, scratched or broken? Duct tape is not a safe repair. If your glasses are broken, cracked or scratched, get a new pair.

Hearing Protection

- ◆ Do not use one-use ear plugs more than once.
- ◆ Re-usable earplugs, canal caps and ear muffs must be cleaned on a regular basis. Dirt and oil will reduce their fit and lessen their protective qualities. Clean with mild soap and water on a regular basis.

Hand Protection

- ◆ There are as many different types of gloves as there are jobs in the workplace. Use the right kind of glove that fits properly for the job you are performing.
- ◆ Always make sure your gloves are in good repair and do not have any rips or tears.

Foot Protection

Caring for your foot protection is a daily requirement.

- ◆ Check the soles, laces and eyelets for wear. Also check the inside soles of your footwear. Any excess wear or damage will compromise their protective properties.
- ◆ Make sure your footwear is free of contaminants such as oil or grease which will eliminate their ability to provide traction.



Keeping your PPE in good shape will not only improve its life and possibly save you money; it will also ensure you are getting all the protection your equipment was designed for.

