

TOOLBOX TALK: PPE AND EYE PROTECTION

Job or site _____

Date _____

Led by _____

Open with this

Quick check around the circle. Hard hat, glasses, boots, and anything the task needs. Anybody missing something, say it now, because we have spares in the truck and there is no version of this where you work without it.

The talk

The order matters. Eliminate the hazard, substitute something safer, engineer it out, change the work practice, and only then put equipment on the person. If a talk about PPE is the only control we have for something, we have skipped four better answers.

Eyes. Around two thousand eye injuries a day happen at work in the United States, and the great majority of them would have been prevented or reduced by proper eye protection. Safety glasses meeting ANSI Z87.1, with the marking on the lens or frame, and side protection. Prescription glasses on their own are not safety glasses.

Match the eye protection to the job. Safety glasses for general work, goggles for dust, chips and splash, a face shield over glasses for grinding, cutting and chemicals, and the right shade for welding. A face shield alone is never enough, it goes over glasses.

Head. Hard hats where anything can fall, fly or swing, or where there is a bump or electrical hazard, meeting ANSI Z89.1. The suspension is what stops the impact, not the shell, so the suspension has to be adjusted, intact and not reversed unless the hat is rated for it. No holes drilled, no paint, no stickers over cracks.

Feet. Sturdy work boots, and a puncture resistant sole on any site with nails and metal debris, which is all of them. Sneakers on a framing job are how people end up with a nail through the arch of the foot.

The employer pays. With narrow exceptions for ordinary prescription eyewear and everyday clothing, OSHA requires the employer to provide required PPE at no cost to the employee. Nobody here is buying their own glasses.

And PPE that does not fit is PPE that comes off. Glasses that fog, gloves that are too big, a hat that slides, a respirator that leaks. If it does not fit, say so and we get one that does, because the alternative is you working without it.

Point at these before anybody starts

- Everybody's eye protection, checking for the Z87 mark and for scratches
- Hard hat suspensions, adjusted and undamaged, and shells with no cracks or holes
- Boots, looking for worn soles and no puncture protection
- The task specific PPE today: face shield, goggles, hearing, respirator, high visibility
- The spares in the truck and who needs one
- Anything that fogs, slips, pinches or leaks, which means the wrong size

The rules that apply

- Eye protection meeting ANSI Z87.1 with side protection whenever there is any risk of flying particles, dust or splash.
- A face shield is always worn over safety glasses, never instead of them.
- Hard hats meeting ANSI Z89.1 wherever objects can fall, fly or swing, with the suspension intact and adjusted.
- Sturdy boots with puncture resistant soles on any site with nails or metal debris.
- Required PPE is provided by the employer at no cost, with narrow exceptions such as ordinary prescription eyewear.
- PPE that does not fit gets replaced, not tolerated. Ill fitting equipment gets taken off.

Ask the crew

- Whose safety glasses are so scratched they cannot see through them properly?
- What is today's task specific PPE, beyond hat, glasses and boots?
- Is anybody working without something because they do not have it? Say it now.

Close with this

Z87 on the lens, suspension adjusted, boots that stop a nail. If it does not fit, tell me and we swap it today.

Attendance

Everybody who was present signs, including subcontractors and anybody visiting the site.

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This talk is general safety information for a crew briefing, not legal advice and not a substitute for the training your employees are required to have. Standards are quoted for orientation only. Check the current text of the standard and your own state plan, which may be stricter than the federal rule.