

NASA-LaRC January 1997 Safety News

A Publication of the Office of Safety, Environment and Mission Assurance (OSEMA)

Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE)

As we do our job from day to day, we are very comfortable in what we do. Sometimes we get a little careless with some of our most precious gifts, our eyes, hands, and feet. In a way we are lucky because we have been given two of each, just try to think of what it would be like to perform your current job missing one of these very special tools. The following should help prepare you so when you leave at the end of a workday you leave with these special tools that cannot be ordered from supply should you lose or break one.

Areas To Protect:

OSHA requires you to use the PPE provided by your employer to prevent you from injuring your head, eyes and face, respiratory system, hands, and feet. Your work areas are surveyed and hazards that could put you at risk are identified. Here are some of the hazards that may be found in your workplace:

Chemical exposures. PPE may be needed to prevent you from inhaling or ingesting substance or from splashes or other skin contact.

Falling or dropping objects. PPE needed to protect the head and feet.

Particulates. Dust may be created when performing your job that can irritate the eyes. If they're inhaled, these dusts can irritate the lungs and respiratory system.

Heat and high temperatures. Without proper PPE when working in this environment your skin or eyes could be burned.

Light radiation. There are some processes such as brazing, cutting, welding, and heat treating that can damage the eyes. Eye risks can also come from furnaces and high intensity lights.

Rotating equipment and parts. Most machines have guards and other design features to protect you from accidents. Sometimes you may need to take additional precautions like a push stick or another person to help.

Rolling or pinching objects. This is primarily a foot hazard whereas objects could roll over or pinch them.

Sharp objects. This includes tools as well as materials used in the job. They can cut or puncture any part of the body if not careful or properly protected.

Get a good fit. Make sure that whatever type of PPE you may use that it fits properly. Some items must be fitted in advance like shoes, respirators and certain hearing protection. Other PPE such as gloves have a variety of sizes, so try them until you get the one that fits you best.

Inspect PPE. All PPE must be in top condition to do its job. Always check each piece of your clothing and equipment before you use it. Check for holes, tears, wear, or any defect that might interfere with the ability for it to protect you.

Practice, practice, practice. Some PPE can be heavy or awkward until you get used to it. Remember that you are not supposed to use the PPE on the job until you demonstrate that you can use it properly.

Use the right PPE. Depending on the hazards you face on the job, you may need a variety of PPE to protect yourself. You need to find out what is available and how to use it properly.

Computers and Fire Drills

What do you do if there is a fire drill in your facility and you have hours of work on your computer? If your facility has been scheduled for a fire drill your Facility Safety Head will know and it is not necessary to shut down your system. On the other hand if it is the real thing your primary interest is to get out safely and leave your computer on.

Safety Classes Offered

Just a reminder that the following safety training classes are available to be presented for you at your safety meetings.

- Confined Spaces (permit required)
- Confined Space Awareness
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Ergonomics (Office or Industrial)
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
- Heat Stress
- Cryogenics
- Chemical Safety
- General Office Safety

If you would like to setup a class contact your supervisor and he can schedule by contacting Butch Jones at 48743; there are limited classes so get your request in early.