



WORKERS' COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT BUREAU

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

April 1, 2024

April Safety Tip

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Learn about the importance of PPE for protecting employees from injury, infection, and minimizing exposure to chemical, biological, and physical hazards.



PPE includes protective clothing for the eyes, head, ears, hands, respiratory system, body, and feet.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Safety

Using PPE, conducting [workplace hazard inspections](#) and [health and safety risk assessments](#) are essential to protecting employees from risks and hazards.

Employees need to be properly trained to use PPE with procedures in place to detect and report any equipment damages before commencing work.

According to the hierarchy of controls by the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#), PPE is recommended to be the last level of defense to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.

Benefits of using PPE:

- Prevent injury
- Protect from excessive chemical exposure
- Prevent the spread of germs and infectious diseases
- Improve employee productivity and efficiency
- Compliance with regulatory requirements

Basic Types of PPE

1. **Face and Eye Protection** - includes safety goggles and face shields. Used for tasks that can cause eye damage or loss of vision, sprays of toxic liquids, splashes, and burns.
2. **Respiratory Protection** - includes full-face respirators, self-contained breathing apparatus, gas masks, N95 respirators, and surgical masks. Used for tasks that can cause inhalation of harmful materials to enter the body including harmful gas, chemicals, large-particle droplets, sprays, splashes, or splatter that may contain viruses and bacteria, viral infections, and more.
3. **Hearing Protection** - includes earmuffs and earplugs. Used for tasks that can cause hearing problems and loss of hearing.
4. **Skin and Body Protection** - includes the following categories to protect employees from physical hazards:
 - **Head Protection** - includes hard hats and headgears. Required for tasks that can cause any force or object falling to the head.
 - **Body Protection** - includes safety vests and suits. Used for tasks that can cause body injuries from extreme temperatures, flames and sparks, toxic chemicals, insect bites, radiation, or to increase visibility.
 - **Hand Protection** - includes safety gloves. Used for tasks that can cause hand and skin burns, absorption of harmful substances, cuts, fractures, or amputations.
 - **Foot Protection** - includes knee pads and safety boots. Used for tasks that can cause serious foot and leg injuries from falling or rolling objects, hot substances, electrical hazards, and slippery surfaces.
 - **Fall Protection** - includes safety harnesses and lanyards. Strictly used for tasks that can cause falling from heights and serious injury or death.

Useful Tools

- [Risk Assessment Overview](#)
- [Job Safety Analysis \(JSA\)](#)
- [PPE Safety Overview](#)

When was the last time you evaluated your PPE and associated processes? Do you need help updating or getting started with the use of PPE? WCMB staff is here to help! Reach out to Rob Virts or Andrew Pitsch at WCMB@mt.gov for help with PPE and workplace safety!

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(800) 287-8266 | TTY (406) 444-1421 | WCMB@mt.gov
100 N. Park Ave. Suite 320 | PO Box 200130 | Helena, MT 59620-0130

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