# Employers Must Provide and Pay for PPE

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that employers protect employees from workplace hazards that can cause injury or illness. Controlling a hazard at its source is the best way to protect workers. However, when engineering, work practice and administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to the workers and ensure its use.

PPE is equipment worn to minimize exposure to a variety of hazards. Examples include items such as gloves, foot and eye protection, protective hearing protection (earplugs, muffs), hard hats, and respirators.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Employer Obligations** | **Workers Obligations** |
| Perform a “hazard assessment” of the workplace to identify and control physical and health hazards. | Properly wear PPE. |
| Identify and provide appropriate PPE for employees. | Attend training sessions on PPE. |
| Train employees in the use and care of the PPE. | Care for, clean, and maintain PPE |
| Maintain PPE, including replacing worn or damaged PPE. | Inform a supervisor of the need to repair or replace PPE. |
| Periodically reviewing, updating, and evaluating the effectiveness of the PPE program. |  |

### Employers Must Pay for PPE

On May 15, 2008, a new OSHA rule about employer payment for PPE went into effect. With few exceptions, OSHA now requires employers to pay for personal protective equipment used to comply with OSHA standards. The final rule does not create new requirements regarding what PPE employers must provide.

The standard makes clear that employers cannot require workers to provide their own PPE and the worker’s use of PPE they already own must be completely voluntary. Even when a worker provides his or her own PPE, the employer must ensure that the equipment is adequate to protect the worker from hazards at the workplace.

### Examples of PPE that Employers Must Pay For

The employer must pay for the following:

* Metatarsal foot protection
* Rubber boots with steel toes
* Non-prescription eye protection
* Prescription eyewear inserts and/or lenses for full face respirators
* Goggles and face shields
* Fire fighting PPE
  + Helmet, gloves, boots, proximity suits, full gear
* Hard hats
* Hearing protection
* Welding PPE

### Payment Exceptions under the OSHA Rule

Employers are not required to pay for some PPE in certain circumstances such as the following:

1. Non-speciality safety-toe protective footwear (including steel-toe shoes or boots) and non-specialty prescription safety eyewear provided that the employer permits such items to be worn off the job site. (OSHA based this decision on the fact that this type of equipment is very personal, is often used outside the workplace, and that it is taken by workers from jobsite to jobsite and employer to employer.)
2. Everyday clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants, street shoes, and normal work boots.
3. Ordinary clothing, skin creams, or other items, used solely for protection from weather, such as winter coats, jackets, gloves, parkas, rubber boots, hats, raincoats, ordinary sunglasses, and sunscreen.
4. Items such as hair nets and gloves worn by food workers for consumer safety.
5. Lifting belts because their value in protecting the back is questionable.
6. When the employee has lost or intentionally damaged the PPE and it must be replaced.

### OSHA Standards that Apply

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **OSHA General Industry PPE Standards** | **OSHA Construction PPE Standards** |
| 1910.132: General requirements and payment | 1926.28: Personal protective equipment |
| 1910.133: Eye and face protection | 1926.95: Criteria for personal protective equipment |
| 1910.134: Respiratory protection | 1926.96: Occupational foot protection |
| 1910.135: Head protection | 1926.100: Head protection |
| 1910.136: Foot protection | 1926.101: Hearing protection |
| 1910.137: Electrical protective devices | 1926.102: Eye and face protection |
| 1910.138: Hand protection | 1926.103: Respiratory protection |

There are also PPE requirements in shipyards and marine terminals and many standards on specific hazards, such as 1910.1030: Bloodborne pathogens and 1910146: Permit-required confined spaces.

### Supplemental Resources

This page was created from the presentation, [Employers Must Provide and Pay for PPE](https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/Handout_2_Employers_Must_Provide_and_Pay_for_PPE.pdf).

Read this online at <https://books.byui.edu/construction_221_con/employers_must_provi>