

## Use it Right

Incorrect use of PPE can lead to incidents by actually impairing your performance. Make sure your PPE fits you and the specific job. Remember to re-evaluate your use of PPE on a regular basis—just as work requirements change, so do requirements for PPE.

## Wear it at Home

People who are extremely careful at work sometimes forget to act the same way at home. Homes can be just as hazardous as workplaces. For example, do you know what controlled products you have in your home and what precautions to take when using them?

Before you do a job at home, evaluate the risks. Maybe you shouldn't even be doing this job. It may be less costly (in terms of money and potential injury) to hire a professional to do the job.

If you decide to do a job at home, assess your need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Probably the most important PPE message is to match it to the specific job you're doing at work and at home. That means to wear the right protection—eye, head, hearing, foot, respiratory, and specialized.

## The Unexpected

Many types of PPE are used for protection against unexpected incidents. Unexpected doesn't mean impossible. Each industry has different hazards—so protect yourself. Even as the last line of defense, PPE may be the one that counts, so use it correctly.

For more information, refer to current applicable Occupational Health and Safety Legislation.

**The Alberta Construction Safety Association's** mission is to provide quality advice and education for the construction industry that will reduce human suffering and financial costs associated with workplace incidents. This brochure is part of a series, **The Toolbox Brochures**, which are available on a variety of safety topics. If you have any questions or comments please contact:



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# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



## Making Safety A Way Of Life



# The Alberta Construction Safety Association

## The Last Line of Defense

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the equipment you wear to reduce exposure to hazards after all attempts have been made to eliminate or control hazards at the source. This can be done by:

- Re-designing the work station
- Substituting hazardous material with non-hazardous material
- Adding safety features to equipment
- Purchasing new equipment

During work, it's important to:

- Follow safe work practices and procedures
- Use appropriate engineering and administrative controls
- Wear the correct PPE

**Remember**—PPE shouldn't be the only or first source of protection—it's a last line of defense.

## Why Should I?

Why should you wear PPE? Just look at the facts. PPE has saved thousands of limbs and lives. If you don't wear it, you run the risk of:

- Loss of sight or hearing
- Burns and abrasions
- Crushed limbs
- Dismemberment
- Chronic diseases
- Lifelong disabilities
- Permanent brain damage
- Fatal injury

## Basic Protection

### Eye and Face Protection

There are many types of eye and face protection—safety glasses, goggles, face shields, and hoods. They are all designed for protection against different hazards. Make sure you use the right protection for your job.

Use the Alberta Occupational Health & Safety Legislation as a minimum standard. As well, look for the CSA imprint. Wearing the right eye and face protection can save two important things—your sight and your smile.



### Foot Protection

Your feet can be impacted, severely compressed, or punctured if you don't wear safety footwear. Pick your foot protection according to the specific job you're doing and hazards you're facing—or you may be in for a painful, crushing experience. Approved construction footwear is verified by a green CSA triangle on the side of the boot.

### Head Protection

Always make sure the hard hat fits and is in good condition. Use the right protection for the job—it can save your mind and your life.



### Hearing Protection

What did you say? Don't let this become your most common phrase. Use the hearing protection you need—whether it's ear plugs, ear muffs, or both.

## Clothes and Gloves

Clean, fitted work clothes and gloves are your skin's defense. Most jobs require long sleeves and gloves. In other jobs these might be a hazard—dress for success and safety.

## Specialized PPE

Every trade has its own hazards. Logging requires leg protection and the roofing industry often uses toe boards. As well, many jobs use controlled products (refer to the Material Safety Data Sheet for PPE information). Whatever the job, know what PPE you need.

## Respiratory Protection

There is a wide range of respiratory protection—from dust masks, cartridge respirators, to self contained breathing apparatus and work packs. This equipment should never be used without proper training and work procedures. Misuse can be deadly.

## PPE Maintenance

Always inspect the PPE you are about to use—it won't do you much good if it's damaged or broken PPE. Keep maintenance records for specialized PPE.

While working with PPE, take care of it and clean it after you are done. Then store PPE in a safe place where it will not get damaged—away from sunlight or contaminants.

## Training

Do you know what you are doing? Do you know how to fit, wear, and maintain your PPE? If you don't, you are rendering it useless.