

Last Line of Defense

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) regulations requires the first line of defense against workplace hazards to be engineering controls. Personal Protective Equipment or PPE should be the last line of defense because that means that all other methods of controlling the hazard, including engineering, elimination, and substitution controls; development of practices and procedures; and training have failed. OH&S Regulations Part 7 regulation 7-1(1)(2).

Common Protection

Eye Protection



There is no such thing as a second chance when it comes to preventing incidents involving eyes. That is why it is important to select the right type of eye and face protection. Eye and face protection

are designed for specific hazards. Regardless of the type of protection selected, it is important to wear it all the time and to examine it regularly, for example, before the start of each work day. Ensure that the protection is clean and free from scratches that could hamper vision. OH&S Regulations section 7-8.

Foot Protection

Proper footwear can help avoid twists and strains, prevent slips and protect feet from falling objects and boot punctures. Select foot protection according to the task and potential hazard. Approved safety footwear will have the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) green triangle on the side or tongue of the boot or shoe. Inspect footwear regularly to ensure it continues to provide the traction and the protection it was designed for. OH&S Regulations regulation 7-11.



Head Protection

Hardhats are standard issue or required on all worksites in the construction industry. To work properly they must be fitted securely on the top of the head and bands adjusted to ensure the suspension system distributes the load evenly over the entire head. Best industry practice is to wear the hardhat with the brim facing forward. Safety headwear must be inspected regularly prior to use and should be replaced when the suspension system is worn or the shell is punctured, split or cracked. OH&S Regulations regulation 7-6.

Hearing Protection

Exposure to excessive noise may create permanent hearing loss. It is important to wear hearing protection that is appropriate to the task. This may include foam earplugs or ear muffs or both. Always ensure that hearing protection is worn as the manufacturer requires. Not paying attention to how it is inserted, maintained and used could compromise hearing and damage the ear canal. Remember, long term exposure to seemingly low noise may cause irreversible damage to hearing. OH&S Regulations section 7-14.

Specialized Protection

Every trade has its own hazards. Specialized PPE may be required for some of those hazards. This may include a form of respiratory protection, which could include a simple dust mask to a self contained breathing system. Hand wear could be required, for example, in the handling of toxic chemicals or when using a knife. Special clothing may have to be worn due to exposure to high temperatures or flames. Education is key, know the hazards that may be encountered and wear the proper PPE when required.

SCSA Guide to OHS Legislation App



Tool Box Talk

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.