

Tool Box Talk

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Last Line of Defence

Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations require the first line of defence against workplace hazards to be engineering controls.

Personal Protective Equipment or PPE should be the last line of defence 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. *OHS Regulations Part 7 regulation 7- 1(1)(2).*

Eye Protection



There is no such thing as a second chance when it comes to preventing incidents involving the 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 workday.

Ensure that the protection is clean and free from scratches that could hamper vision. *OHS 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. *OHS Regulations 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.

The best industry practice is to wear the hardhat with the brim facing forward. Safety headwear must be inspected regularly before use and should be replaced when the suspension system is worn, or the shell is punctured, split or cracked. *OHS Regulations section 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. *OHS 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. Handwear 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.