

# REFERENCE GUIDE

A Loss Control Service from Donegal Insurance Group



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

### Introduction

Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE, is equipment or clothing worn to minimize employee exposure to hazards that can cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. It is required when workplace exposures cannot be adequately controlled through other more effective measures, but PPE alone should NOT be the first control measure for employee protection. PPE may include items that protect employees feet, hands, head, eyes or face.

Employers must take the necessary action steps to make employees aware of the appropriate workplace protection measures with the first step as performing an assessment of the workplace to determine what hazards are present, or are **likely** to be present, and may necessitate control measures. The use of PPE should be considered as a last resort.

More details of PPE requirements are in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) standard 29 CFR 1910.132 with the hierarchy of controls as follows.

### Engineering Controls

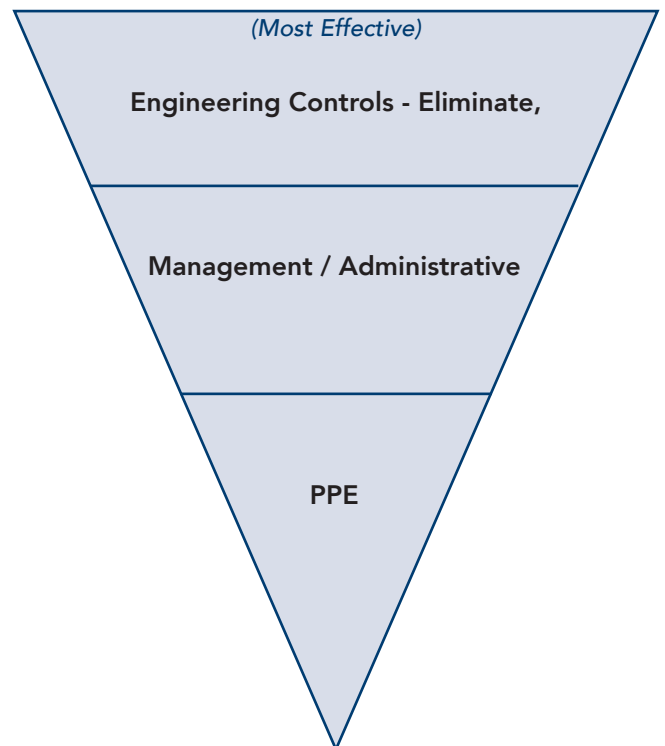
These are controls that eliminate or isolate a hazard so employees are no longer exposed to it. This can be done through design. An example is taking a job task and automating it or enclosing it completely to remove the worker from the hazard. Substitution may also be done whereby a hazardous task, performed by an employee, is substituted with a task with a less hazardous exposure. For example, if an employee works with a hazardous chemical, there may be a chemical on the market that accomplishes the same outcome in the process, but is less hazardous or non-hazardous to the employee.

### Management / Administrative Controls

Management can take proactive steps to reduce the impact of hazards on employees. Management controls include, but are not limited to: employee training, job rotation, specific work procedures, written safety protocols, and housekeeping/maintenance.

### PPE

The use of items such as hearing protection, safety glasses, gloves, slip resistant shoes, hard hats, fall arrest systems, respirators, etc. should be the final control measure in employee safety and only used when Engineering Controls cannot be made or do not completely eliminate the hazard. Even with PPE use, the worker may still be in direct contact with a hazard. PPE training is also critical in reducing risk so employees fully understand proper use and fit, limitations of PPE use, know when to replace PPE, as well as perform proper care and maintenance of any PPE.



After the assessment of the workplace is complete, the employer should select and train affected employees on the proper PPE for the task along with how to select the correct size, proper usage, cleaning, and storage. Training should be conducted so employees know the following:

- ✓ When PPE is necessary
- ✓ What PPE is necessary
- ✓ How to properly adjust and wear PPE
- ✓ The limitations of PPE
- ✓ The proper care, maintenance, useful life and disposal of the PPE

Each employee should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the training and the ability to use PPE properly before being allowed to perform work requiring the use of PPE. The employer should provide retraining if an employee does not understand the requirements, does not wear the protection properly, or if conditions in the workplace change making previous training obsolete. Document all training provided to employees.

**Employee-owned equipment** – Where employees provide their own protective equipment, the employer should assure the adequacy of the equipment, including proper maintenance and sanitation of such equipment.

### **References & Additional Information**

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration: 1910.132](#)

[OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Overview](#)

[OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Fact Sheet](#)

[OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Hazards and Solutions](#)

[OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Assessment](#)

[Personal Protective Equipment Assessment \(SAMPLE\)](#)

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