

## How the Right Hi-Vis Can Help Keep You Safe

*PPE should always be used as a 'last line of defense' when other controls are not available or practical. However, the proper PPE is an important tool in your safety toolbox.*

It's a common sight to see many workers wearing Hi-Vis clothing when working in and around a yard, shop or wash bay. Frequently too, when administrative staff must sometimes traverse these areas they also don their Hi-Vis vests. This is all well and good, but when an article of PPE is this common many people may be using it as an afterthought and not be aware of correct applications of Hi-Vis in different situations.

If you are either a federally or provincially regulated company, the legislation states that an employer must provide High Visibility Safety Apparel that meets the CSA-Z96 standard. This standard outlines three classes of Hi-Vis which are appropriate in different lighting situations, and for different hazards of exposure to vehicular traffic.

Class 1 is the lowest body coverage with good visibility. It is suitable when workers are exposed to low risk activities, generally when vehicles are moving slower than 40 kilometers per hour, in good lighting conditions and no distractions. For a worker in a shop, crossing a yard, working in a shipping / receiving operation, or warehouse operation, Class 1 Hi-Vis will be the appropriate level. If you've seen a mechanics jumpsuit with the "suspenders" as Hi-Vis material and a cross-hatch "X" of Hi-Vis at the back, this is a Class 1.

Class 2 Hi-Vis provides more body coverage of the high-visibility material than Class 1, and provides superior visibility. It is required when vehicles or equipment is moving between 40-80 km/h, in poor-light conditions (dawn or dusk, foggy or snowing) while vehicles are moving slower than 40 km/h, or when workers are performing tasks which divert their attention from approaching vehicle traffic. If you've seen a 'standard' orange Hi-Vis vest with fluorescent yellow 'suspenders', this is a Class 2.

Class 3 is the highest of all classes. This class is for high risk activities such as worker exposure to vehicle speeds exceeding 80 km/h. Whenever a worker must be seen from a great distance (390 meters minimum) for a driver to be able to react, or in low-

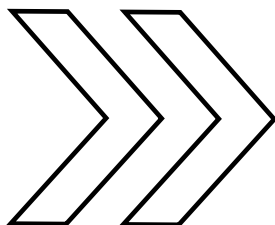


light conditions or at nighttime. If you would need to exit your vehicle on the side of the highway you may need Class 3 Hi-Vis.

All workers must be trained in the care, maintenance and use of Hi-Vis clothing if they are required to use it for their jobs. Training should include when: to use Hi-Vis, and which Hi-Vis to use in a given situation, the importance of using the PPE only in the specified way and the limitations of its use, how to store and maintain the PPE correctly, how to check for wear and tear, and when to recognize that it is no longer fit for use.

As with all PPE use, a hazard assessment must be done on each job site that may require its use. When the hazard assessment is complete, the employer must select appropriate controls. PPE should always be used as a 'last line of defense' when other controls are not available or practical. The first line of defense for worker safety in a yard where traffic is moving through would be to control the flow of that traffic and reduce the workers' exposure to moving vehicles. Using Hi-Vis clothing would then be a best practice and provide more warning to vehicle operators that workers are on foot in the area.

If you have any questions relates to High-Visibility Safety Apparel or any other Occupational Health and Safety matter, please reach out to one of the advisors at RPM.



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