

PPE at the Workplace

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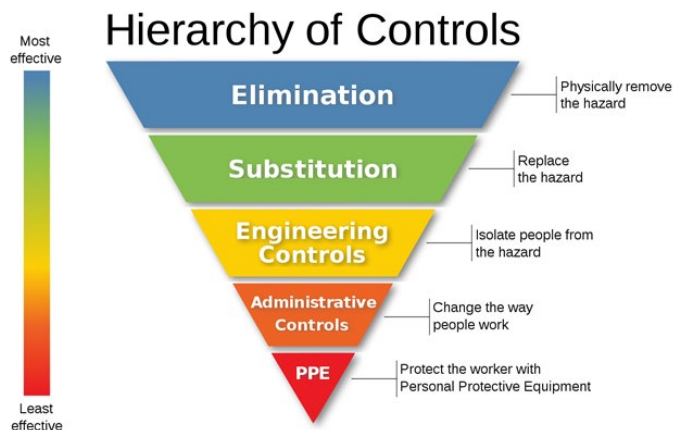
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Workplace hazards are varied, including chemicals or electrical exposure, mechanical or physical hazards, and many others. The most common PPE includes head protection (safety helmets, bump caps), eye protection (safety glasses or goggles, full face shields), ear protection (ear plugs, earmuffs), gloves (cut, tear, pierce or shred resistant), fall arrest (harnesses, tethering, lanyards), and footwear (steel toes, anti-slip grips). Many other types exist as well, even chainsaw resistant pants and gloves.

A common misconception is that all hazards and safety concerns can be solved by implementing and using personal protective equipment. In fact, PPE should never be your first line of defense against hazards. According to the hierarchy of hazard controls, control methods at the top of graphic are potentially more effective and protective than those at the bottom.

It is the final item on the list for a very good reason. Using PPE is only one element in a complete hazard control program that would use a variety of strategies to maintain a safe and healthy environment. PPE does not reduce the hazard itself nor does it guarantee permanent or total protection. Personal protective equipment should never be the only method used to reduce exposure except under very as it may fail and stop protecting the worker with little or no warning. To be compliant and suitable for use in Canada, most PPE must be approved by The CSA Group (formerly the Canadian Standards Association).

You might recognize some of these CSA markings which apply to safety footwear:



No matter the case, personal protective equipment should be safely designed and constructed and should be maintained in a clean and reliable fashion. It should fit comfortably, encouraging worker use. If the personal protective equipment does not fit properly, it can make the difference between being safely covered or dangerously exposed. When engineering, work practice, and administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide personal protective equipment to their workers and ensure its proper use. Employers are also required to train each worker required to use personal protective equipment to know:



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- When it is necessary
- What kind is necessary
- How to properly put it on, adjust, wear, and take it off
- The limitations of the equipment
- Proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of the equipment

If PPE is to be used, a PPE program should be implemented. This program should address the hazards present; the selection, maintenance, and use of PPE; the training of employees; and monitoring of the program to ensure its ongoing effectiveness. For more information about PPE programs, please contact your RPM advisor for assistance. In Spring 2022 RPM will officially launch Journey 2 Safety (a.k.a. J2S). This innovative platform is a mobile and interactive safety unit that is available to travel the province conveying safety and health awareness to personnel at their workplace or safety event. Three of the five dynamic presentations are PPE focused. Topics include head, eye, and hand safety with working at heights and safe lifting also featured.

Do you need more information? RPM can help!

Please note RPM courses are offered to RPM registered companies only. Your company must be registered with RPM and be in the process of working towards certification or must have achieved the SAFE Work Manitoba Trucking Certificate of Recognition. Not yet registered in the RPM program? Today is a great day to get started!

Please contact RPM by emailing info@rpmsafety.ca or calling 204-632-6600, or by visiting our website www.rpmsafety.ca.

