



Risk Safety Bulletin Julu 2026

Personal Protective Equipment, Tool Hazards, and Hearing Conservation



Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be safely designed, properly constructed, and kept clean and reliable. PPE is worn to reduce employee exposure to hazards that can cause serious workplace injuries or illnesses, including chemical, physical, electrical, mechanical, and other risks. Examples include gloves, safety glasses, protective footwear, earplugs or earmuffs, hard hats, respirators, N-95 masks, coveralls, warning vests, and other equipment appropriate for the exposure. Employers must assess workplace hazards and provide the protective equipment employees need.

PPE should fit comfortably so employees are more likely to use it. Poorly fitting equipment can leave workers dangerously exposed. When engineering, work practice, or administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide enough protection, employers must provide PPE and ensure it is used correctly. Employers must also train each worker who is required to use PPE to understand:

- 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.

When PPE is used, employers should implement a PPE program that identifies workplace hazards and addresses PPE selection, maintenance, use, employee training, and ongoing program monitoring. These requirements should be reflected in the employer's IIPP.

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3380.html>

Hand and Power Tools



Employers should establish basic safety procedures and safeguards for all hand and portable power tools used by employees. Because tools are used so often, it can be easy to overlook their hazards. A serious incident may occur before tool-related risks are identified, avoided, or eliminated.

Employees who use hand and power tools and may be exposed to falling, flying, abrasive, or splashing objects—or to harmful dusts, fumes, mists, vapors, or gases—must receive appropriate

PPE. OSHA identifies five basic safety rules to help prevent hand and power tool hazards:

- Keep all tools in good condition with regular maintenance.
- Use the right tool for the job.
- Examine each tool for damage before use and do not use damaged tools.
- Operate tools according to the manufacturers' instructions.

- Provide and use properly the right personal protective equipment.

Employers are responsible for ensuring that employee tools and equipment are safe. Employees must be trained to use and handle tools and equipment properly.

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/sb7g3a20.html>

Hearing Conservation

Hearing conservation programs are designed to prevent occupational hearing loss, preserve remaining hearing, and give workers the knowledge and hearing protection needed to protect themselves. Employers must measure noise levels; provide annual hearing exams, hearing protection, and training at no cost; and evaluate whether hearing protectors are adequate, unless changes to tools, equipment, or schedules reduce worker noise exposure below 85 dBA.



Employers must offer employees at least one type of earplug and one type of earmuff. With help from someone trained to fit hearing protectors, employees should choose the size and type best suited to their work environment.

The selected protector should be comfortable and provide enough protection to help prevent hearing loss.

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5097.html>

The Cal/OSHA website offers resources to help employers meet their obligation to provide a safe workplace.

Employers must train workers who are required to wear PPE to:

- Use protective equipment properly,
- Be aware of when personal protective equipment is necessary,
- Know what kind of protective equipment is necessary,
- Understand the limitations of personal protective equipment in protecting workers from injury,
- Put on, adjust, wear, and take off personal protective equipment, and
- Maintain protective equipment properly.

The ICRMA website offers sample policies and procedures for members.

For questions about these programs, contact Bob May, Director of Loss Control, at 760.221.8205 or biem47@outlook.com.