EYE PROTECTION

When it comes to eye protection, you and your employer share responsibility for your safety. YOU have to take safety seriously and use eye protection as required.

WHERE ARE THE REGULATIONS?

Regulations have been issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on personal protective equipment (PPE) in general, and on eye protection in particular. You can find these regulations at 29 CFR 1910.132-.133 as a guide.

The Department assesses the hazards in the workplace to determine if eye and face protection is needed.

You will receive departmental training in the proper use of eye and face protection and understand:

- When eye and face protection is necessary.
- What eye and face protection is necessary.
- How to properly put on, take off, adjust, and wear goggles, face shields, etc.
- PPE limitations.
- Proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of eye and face protection.

You must show that you understand the training and can use eye and face protection properly before you will be allowed to perform work requiring its use.

EYE INJURIES ARE OFTEN PERMANENT

An eye injury resulting in blindness cannot be cured. Excuses like "I don't wear my goggles because my hair gets messed up" or "I look silly in safety glasses" seem unimportant when compared with the value of a pair of healthy eyes. Proper eye protection reduces your chances of injury and reduces the severity of injury if an accident does occur.

WHAT ARE THE HAZARDS?

Here are some of the causes of eye injuries:

- Injurious gases, vapors, and liquids.
- Flying objects or particles.
- Dusts or powders, fumes and mists.

- Splashing metal.
- Thermal and radiation hazards such as heat, glare, ultraviolet, and infrared rays.
- Lasers.
- Electrical arcing and sparks.

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR EYES?

Your Department identifies the hazards in your work area and have determined how best to avoid eye injuries. Eye hazards can be reduced by using machine guards and shields. PPE is needed if the hazards aren't eliminated. The City will also provide eyewash facilities if you are exposed to corrosive materials.

Equipment guards

Be sure to use any guards, screens, and shields that are attached to equipment. If the guards don't completely eliminate the eye and face hazards, wear eye and face protection.

Movable screens can be used to separate workers at one machine from those at nearby work stations. Portable welding screens can be positioned around welding areas to protect other workers from sparks and radiation.

Eyewash facilities are important

If a chemical splashes in your eyes, move quickly to an emergency shower or eyewash. Look directly into the stream of water and hold your eyes open with your fingers. Flush your eyes for at least 15 minutes and then get medical attention.

Personal protective equipment

A wide variety of safety equipment is available. Protective eye and face equipment must comply with ANSI guidelines and be marked directly on the piece of equipment (e.g. glasses frames and lenses).

Safety glasses

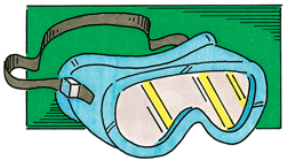
The most common type of protective equipment for the eyes is safety glasses. They provide protection from flying chips or particles, and they can have tinted lenses for radiation and laser hazards.

They may look like normal street-wear glasses; they are made of glass, plastic, or polycarbonate. But, they are made much stronger than street-wear lenses, are impact resistant, and come in prescription or nonprescription (Plano) forms. Some styles of Plano safety glasses are designed to fit over prescription glasses.

Safety frames are stronger than street-wear frames. Different styles of frames are available for different jobs.

Safety glasses also are available with side shield guards. Side shields provide protection for the sides of your eyes. Eye-cup side shields provide more thorough eye protection from hazards that come from the front, side, top, or bottom.

Goggles



Goggles are very similar to safety glasses but fit closer to the eyes. They can provide additional protection in hazardous situations involving liquid splashes, fumes, vapors, and dust. Some models can be worn over prescription glasses.

Face shields

Full-face protection is often required to guard against molten metal and chemical splashes. Face shields are available to fit with a hard hat or to wear directly on the head. A face shield should always be used with other eye protection such as goggles or glasses.

Cleaning

You should maintain and clean your eye protection regularly. Use lens cleaners recommended by the equipment's manufacturer or mild soap and warm water. Strong solvents can damage the lenses. Dirty, scratched, or cracked lenses reduce vision and seriously reduce protection. Replace damaged eye and face protection immediately.

WHAT ABOUT CONTACT LENSES?

Most workers can safely wear their contacts on the job.

It is important to remember that your contacts should be worn along with additional eye protection.

It's also a good idea to keep a spare pair of contacts or prescription glasses with you in case the pair you usually wear is lost or damaged while you're working. You might also want to make sure your supervisor or plant first aid personnel know that you wear contacts, in the event of any injury on the job.

WHEN ARE ABSORPTIVE LENSES REQUIRED?

Absorptive lenses are used to absorb or screen out unwanted light and glare. Most ordinary sunglasses do not provide the right glare protection. For welding or work with torches, goggles or helmets are available with filter lenses to shield the eyes from radiation and glare.

WORK AT WORKING SAFELY

Let's review the following important rules about eye safety:

1. Match safety equipment to the degree of hazard present.
2. Know what protective devices are available on the job and how they can protect you.
3. Make sure machine guards are in place.
4. Know the location and operation of emergency eyewash equipment.
5. Street-wear eyeglasses are not designed to be safety glasses and should never be used as such.
6. Face shields should not be used alone, but always with other eye protection such as goggles or glasses.
7. Make sure any safety device you use fits properly.
8. Safety equipment should be maintained in good condition and replaced when defective.