



Loss Control and YOU

Personal Protective Equipment

By **Mike Huss**
Loss Control Supervisor

Employers are required to protect their employees from workplace hazards through the use of engineering and/or administrative controls. The purpose of engineering controls is to prevent employee exposure to potential machine, equipment or work environment hazards. Administrative or work practice controls remove exposure to potential hazards by changing the way employees perform their jobs. When these controls are not feasible or do not provide adequate protection, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. PPE may be used alongside, but not in place of, engineering and/or administrative controls.

To determine which personal protection is appropriate you must:

- Identify hazards in the work area
- Select and utilize appropriate PPE to protect you from those hazards
- Receive training on how to correctly use and care for your PPE
- Learn the limitations of the equipment including the useful life span

Eye and Face Protection

There are five basic types of eye and face protection available: safety glasses, goggles, face shields, welding helmets and laser eyewear. Wearing eye protection correctly is as important as choosing the right equipment. Safety glasses, which provide front and side protection, should grip your head snugly and sit comfortably

on the bridge of your nose. Goggles, which can be worn over prescription and safety glasses, should also fit snugly and seal the entire eye area. Face shields, welding helmets and laser eyewear should also fit snugly. Always wear safety glasses or goggles underneath shields and helmets for extra protection. Contact lenses and phototropic (variable-tint) lenses are often prohibited in some work environments, so check your employer's rules.



Hearing Protection

Protect yourself from repeated exposure to excessive noise by wearing earplugs or ear muffs. Disposable earplugs are made from many types of material. The denser the material, the higher the Noise Reduction Rating. Throw away disposable earplugs as soon as you remove them. Earmuffs are filled with liquid or foam. When worn with earplugs, they offer the best protection from sound and flying

debris. Make sure there's a good cup seal around your ear. Store reusable hearing protection away from damaging substances and conditions after you clean them.

Head Protection

Use head protection such as hard hats whenever working in areas where falling or flying objects are possible and when working near exposed electrical conductors and moving machinery. Hard hats approved by the American National Standards Institute are tested to withstand a 40 foot-pound impact which is the equivalent of a 2 pound hammer falling about 20 feet. There should always be a space between the top of your head and the inside shell of the hat. This space allows the suspension system to absorb most of the impact from a striking object, and allows for air circulation. Check for a good fit by bending over with the hat on and shaking your head. The hat shouldn't fall off because of its own weight. The suspension systems should be washed and inspected monthly. If any part is frayed or worn, replace it immediately.

Hand Protection

Hands and fingers are the most vulnerable part of the body. Knives cause most injuries to the hands, but working around chemicals, abrasive or corrosive materials, electrical equipment, machinery and hand tools can also be dangerous. Cut-resistant gloves should be worn when working with sharp objects or sharp tools. Wear appropriate gloves to protect against specific workplace hazards since no one glove will protect you against

all hazards.

Foot Protection

Safety footwear protects you from compression, impact, punctures and chemicals. Types of foot protection include work shoes or boots and specialty items. Work shoes or boots are for long term use around heavy machinery and wet, muddy, frigid or high heat conditions. Specialty footwear includes spikes and chains, thermal socks and liners, leg, foot and metatarsal guards. For work around water, chemicals, oil or grease wear rubber or plastic foot protection with slip- and oil resistant soles.

Special Protective Clothing

When working around open flames or sparks, flame retardant clothing is required. Special protectors such as leather aprons protect against hazards posed by heavy, sharp or rough materials.

Fall Protection

Every year, many workers are injured in falls that could have been prevented if they had been using fall protection. The most effective piece of fall protection, when correctly secured, is the full body harness. A properly adjusted full body harness will spread the shock load over your body in the event of a fall. The shock absorber will lower you to a safe, slow stop.

Safety News & Calendar

May 2011

By [Kim Coonrod](#)
Loss Control Manager

[OSHA Provides Fall Protection Tips for Residential Construction Workers](#)

OSHA has issued a guidance document on fall protection in residential construction.

The document provides safety methods for employers to prevent fall-related injuries and deaths, including fall arrest systems, safety net systems, guardrails, ladders and scaffolds.

“Fatalities from falls are the No. 1 cause of workplace deaths in construction,” OSHA administrator David Michaels said in a press release. “We cannot tolerate workers getting killed in residential construction when effective means are readily available to prevent those deaths.”

[OSHA Hazard Warning: Hair Straightening Products Could Harm Your Health](#)

Hair salon owners and workers should be aware of potential formaldehyde exposure from certain hair smoothing products, according to an OSHA [hazard alert](#) issued April 11. The alert summarizes OSHA’s investigations into the products, health hazards of formaldehyde and protective measures.

In response to worker complaints, federal OSHA and several state programs are investigating hair smoothing products. One investigation found a product with formaldehyde levels that exceeded OSHA limits for a salon even though the product was labeled formaldehyde-free, an OSHA press release said. Exposure to formaldehyde can irritate the eyes, skin, nose and upper respiratory tract, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Formaldehyde has also been linked to cancer.

[Agency looks to stem drug use in the workplace](#)

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy is working with the business community to eliminate



substance abuse in the workplace. In a Feb. 4 blog posting, ONDCP stated that drug abuse in the United States costs \$16 billion in health care costs and \$129 billion in lost productivity each year. The agency called on businesses to establish alcohol and drug-free workplace policies.

ONDCP points organizations to the following Department of Labor resources to assist in the creation of such a program:

- Guidelines for creating an alcohol- and drug-free workplace program
- Training and education materials
- An overview of state and local regulations concerning when, where and how employers can establish workplace drug programs

Safety Calendar

May 2011—[National Electrical Safety Month](#)

June 2011—[National Safety Month](#)

July 2011—[UV Safety Month](#)

Lessons From Losses

By [Courtney Rosengartner](#)
Loss Control Coordinator

A 38 year old contractor performing electrical work at a well known department store received a high voltage electrical shock. As a result he fell to the floor of the scaffolding, hit his head and remained unconscious as he was transported by ambulance. He was hospitalized for four days with traumatic brain injury. He experienced brain swelling, loss of memory, anxiety, depression, insomnia and loss of dexterity amongst other ailments. The injured

employee has been out of work for over a year with no anticipated date of return. The total loss is expected to reach \$170,000.

Safety training should be a requirement for all employees. The

employer is responsible for instructing each employee to recognize and avoid unsafe conditions which apply to their work and work areas. A lockout tagout program should be developed to protect individuals who work on electric circuits and equipment.

Service Focus

Safety Checklists

By [Nick Gustafson](#)
Loss Control Coordinator

Regular workplace self-inspections are an essential part of any accident prevention program. An effective self-inspection program relies on thorough, periodic evaluations of hazards throughout the workplace as well as consistent follow-up to assure that any unnecessary hazards are resolved as quickly as possible. The best way to ensure that your program meets these criteria is to use self-inspection checklists. A written checklist assists you in performing consistent inspections. By using a self-inspection checklist, you can track whether conditions are improving or worsening over time.

FirstComp offers a variety of basic self-inspection checklists and can also help you customize a checklist to meet your business needs. To receive more information, contact the loss control department.

For information about any of FirstComp’s Loss Control Services, please call (888) 500-3344 or email losscontrol@firstcomp.com

Class Code Focus: Electrical Contractors



[Working Outdoors in Warm Climates - OSHA](#)

[Control of Hazardous Energy – Lockout/Tagout - OSHA](#)

[Controlling Electrical Hazards – OSHA](#)

[Electrical Safety – Safety and Health for Electrical Trades – NIOSH](#)

[Electrical Safety in the Workplace Booklet – ESFI](#)

[Ergonomic Survival Guide for Electricians – CalOSHA](#)

[Fall Protection in Construction – OSHA](#)

[Hand and Power Tools – OSHA](#)

[Hearing Conservation – OSHA](#)

[Model Plans and Programs – Bloodborne Pathogens and Hazard Communications – OSHA](#)

[Personal Protective Equipment – OSHA](#)

[Stairways and Ladders – OSHA](#)

[Training Requirements in OSHA Standards and Training Guidelines – OSHA](#)

[Working De-Energized – Washington State, Labor & Industries](#)