

According to OSHA standards, employers are required to assess the workplace to determine if potential injury-causing hazards are present or are likely to become present. If a hazard cannot be managed or eliminated through engineering, work practice and administrative controls, employers must protect their employees with personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for the identified hazard. This Tech Sheet outlines the recommended procedure for conducting a PPE hazard assessment.

Collect and Review Supporting Information

- Begin by reviewing injury data to obtain information about some of the hazards in your facility. Workers' compensation claims history and OSHA 300 logs can provide insight into some of the hazards in your facility.
- Review material safety data sheets (MSDS or the newer SDS) to identify chemical hazards and suggested PPE.
- Review equipment operator manuals to determine the manufacturer's safety warnings and recommended PPE.
- Involve employees and supervisors from each work area being assessed. Review job procedures, potential hazards and the PPE currently in use. Discuss the reasons for conducting the PPE assessment and ask for employee and supervisor input. In many cases, production employees are aware of hazards unknown to the evaluator, so obtaining employee input is a critical part of the hazard assessment.

Conduct A Walk-Through Survey

Conduct a walk-through survey of the work areas where employees may need PPE. Observe the layout of the workplace, location of the workers, work operations and associated hazards, areas where PPE is currently being used and the reason for its use. The following basic hazard categories should be considered when performing the hazard assessment:

- Impact (workers hitting or being hit by objects)

- Penetration (sharp objects piercing foot/hand)
- Compression (roll-over or pinching hazards)
- Temperature extremes
- Respiratory hazards
- Noise
- Electrical hazards
- Light radiation (welding, brazing, cutting, etc.)
- Chemical or biological exposure (inhalation, ingestion, skin contact, etc.)



Organize the Data

Following the walk-through survey, organize the data into a written hazard assessment. Your data should include the work activities assessed, location of the assessment and hazards identified. The Hazard Assessment Table on the back of this sheet is an example of how to organize the data.

PPE Selection Guidelines

The next step is to determine what types of PPE should be used to protect employees from the identified hazards. Your assessment should determine if your employees need PPE to protect the following:

- Torso and abdominal protection
- Eye and face
- Head
- Feet
- Legs
- Hands
- Hearing protection
- Respiratory system
- Fall hazards

Continued

The following steps should be taken to complete this process:

1. Become familiar with the potential hazards, the types of PPE available and what they can and cannot do in preventing injuries and illnesses.
2. Compare the hazards associated with the work environment and the capabilities of the available PPE.
3. Select PPE that ensures a level of protection greater than the minimum required to protect employees from the hazards.
4. Fit the user with the PPE and provide training on the care, use and limitations of PPE.

Once the PPE is selected, you can add the final column to the PPE Hazard Assessment Table. Remember, personal protective equipment should not be used as the only method to protect employees from hazards. Instead, PPE should be used in conjunction with engineering controls, administrative controls and procedural controls.

Hazard Assessment Certification

Each PPE hazard assessment should be documented by issuing a written Hazard Assessment Certification. This document should include:

- The workplace that was evaluated
- The individual(s) who conducted the evaluation
- The date of the hazard assessment
- The document labeled as a Certification of Hazard Assessment

For Additional Information

EMC Insurance Companies: www.emcins.com

- Safety by Topic – Personal Protective Equipment

Occupational Safety & Health Administration:
www.osha.gov

- Eye and Face Protection e-Tool
- Publication 3151– Personal Protective Equipment

Hazard Assessment Table			
Work Activity Assessed	Location of Assessment	Hazards Identified	PPE Selected
Grinding – Metal	Building #7 – Shop	Flying particles	Safety glasses with side shields
		Noise	Ear plugs or muffs
Gas Welding	Building #5 – Shop	Flash burn (optical radiation)	Welding goggles 4-8 shading
		Burns to hands	Leather gloves
Tree Trimming	Around the building	Falling branches	Hardhats (Type I, class C or G)
		Cuts to hands	Leather gloves
Mastic Floor Stripping	Office hallways	Sodium hydroxide/Respiratory exposure	Air purifying respirators
		Sodium hydroxide/Skin exposure	Neoprene or nitrile gloves
		Sodium hydroxide/Eye exposure	Chemical goggles
Office Work	Building #6	None	None