

Safety Note # 191

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT



Hazards exist in every workplace, and in many different forms. Cal-OSHA requires the employer to protect their employees from workplace hazards that can cause illness or injury. Cal-OSHA recommends employers first use engineering or work practice controls to manage or eliminate hazards to the greatest extent possible. If these measures are not feasible, or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE is equipment worn to eliminate, preclude, or minimize exposure to a variety of hazards.

California Labor Code 6401, requires the employer to provide PPE and the practices, means, methods, and operations of said equipment.

Cal-OSHA, Title 8, Section 3380, requires the employer to conduct a workplace hazard assessment to determine if hazards are present which necessitate the use of Personal Protective Equipment. Cal-OSHA addresses providing PPE for the Head, Face, Ears, Hands, Feet, Limbs and Respiratory System.

- The employer is responsible to provide training to employees who are required to wear PPE. The training must include the following information: when PPE is necessary, what PPE is necessary, how to properly wear PPE, limitations of the PPE, and the proper care, maintenance, and disposal of the PPE.
- Any employee who is required to wear PPE must be able to demonstrate the ability to use the PPE properly before performing work.
- PPE must be reasonably comfortable and not unduly encumber the employee's movement necessary to perform the work. PPE must properly fit each employee.
- PPE should be inspected, cleaned, and maintained at regular intervals so that it provides protection.
- The employer is responsible for providing the means to clean and maintain PPE.
- PPE such as coveralls and respirators used in pesticide operations must be cleaned at the workplace or by a commercial cleaning company, not at the employee's home.
- The employer is responsible for providing all replacement parts for PPE. There should be a ready supply of PPE parts, such as respirator cartridges, and disposable PPE in stock.
- Damaged or worn PPE must be removed and replaced.

Personal Protective Equipment, such as respirators, ear plugs, and gloves should not be shared due to personal sanitation issues.

For further information, see the following Safety Notes: Safety Note #7 (Pesticide Glove Use), Safety Note #128 (General Respirator Safety), Safety Note #134 (Choosing the Proper Work Attire), and Pesticide Safety Information (Pesticide Work Clothing).