

Eye Protection Basics



Workplace or jobsite operations expose some or all of your workers to hazards that can injure their eyes.

Flying or falling wood, metal or stone particles, splashing corrosive or harmful liquids and/or light radiation from welding or lasers endanger the sight of your workers. Nationwide, hazards injure nearly 1,000 workers' eyes each day. The National Safety Council estimates first aid by a medical professional for an eye injury can cost you \$350; a Workers' Compensation claim payment can cost \$3,600. Downtime can increase your business costs while your injured workers recuperate.

OSHA estimates you can prevent 90% of these injuries by using proper eye protection. You can protect a worker's eyes for less than \$10 in many instances. You can select between many types & styles

of protective eyewear. A safety equipment supplier can help you select the best ones for your needs. In general, you should select the types that:

- Protect adequately (*see examples shown below*);
- Are reasonably comfortable (*to encourage the workers wearing them*);
- Fit snugly & do not interfere with the workers' movement;
- Are durable, capable of being disinfected, & easily cleaned;
- Fit over prescription eyewear (*unless made to workers prescriptions*).

The eyewear shown below at the left offers protection against hazards shown at the right.

Spectacles with sideshield, cup goggles, cover goggles, face shield	<i>Chipping, grinding, masonry work, sanding, riveting, machining</i>
Cup goggles, cover goggles	<i>Woodwork, buffing, dusty conditions</i>
Indirectly vented or non-vented cover goggles, face shield with indirectly or non-vented goggles underneath	<i>Corrosive/caustic or otherwise harmful liquid</i>
Non-vented cover goggles	<i>Irritating mist</i>
Eyewear recommended by safety or laser equipment supplier	<i>Laser equipment</i>
Welding helmet or hand-held welding shield	<i>Electric arc welding</i>
Welding goggles, welding helmet, or hand-held welding shield	<i>Gas welding, torch brazing, torch cutting</i>

Sources:
 IHS Publishing Group, Compliance Magazine, Volume 3, Number 5, May 1996
 National Safety Council, Accident Prevention Manual for Business & Industry: Engineering & Technology, Tenth Edition, 1992
 U.S. Dept. of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration, 29CFR 1910.133, 1994