

Toolbox Talks 2

047: Unsafe Acts with PPE

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Look at a few pieces of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used on this job site. Think about the correct way to use these, and be prepared to discuss.

What this Safety Talk covers:

Most injuries occur not due to unsafe conditions, but due to unsafe acts. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) is supposed to make us safe, but PPE can be used unsafely. This Safety Talk addresses unsafe acts with PPE.

Discussion notes:

Unsafe acts with PPE

- Wearing your hard hat backwards. The suspension is designed to work in one direction, and the bill provides some protection to your nose and eyes.
- Wearing something under your hard hat. This interferes with the suspension.
- Wearing your safety glasses in any position other than the intended one. They protect your eyes when properly seated.
- Wearing amber lens safety glasses in normal daylight conditions. These lenses help you see better in poor lighting conditions. Wearing them in normal lighting simply makes everything look a funny color.
- Wearing dark lenses in normal lighting conditions. Some people do this to “look cool” or to just have a different lens color. Today, safety glasses are available in a variety of lens tints, such as green, blue and silver. The shading reduces your vision, meaning you are less likely to see dangers and more likely to be injured.
- Wearing normal safety glasses in high sunlight conditions or wearing normal sunglasses on the job to protect from UV. The choice is not either/or. UV-rated safety glasses are available in a variety of tints and attractive styles.
- “Saving money” by not replacing safety glasses that have become pitted or scratched.
- Taking safety glasses off to see better. This could result in an eye injury. Then you won’t see at all.
- Wearing polyester or microfiber under a blast suit. Nobody should ever wear polyester on the job, because high heat can make it melt *into* the skin.
- Using rubber electrical gloves as work gloves. The rubber part of an electrical glove is a liner. Protect it by wearing the outer shell, also.
- Using electrical blankets as floor mats. Your shoes can damage the rubber, leaving micro perforations or other defects in it. These blankets are meant to be draped over things, not stood on or kneeled on.
- Using the wrong respirator for the environment. Each model of respirator is rated for a particular set of hazards. Wearing the wrong one means you aren’t protected.
- Removing and reinserting earplugs frequently. If you are using rollup foam earplugs, whatever is on your fingers will be in your ears. And it may not be good.

Review and discussion

1. How should you wear your hard hat, and why?
2. What can you wear under your hard hat that will interfere with the ability of your hard hat to protect your head from a bolt dropped from 20 feet above you? *[Note to presenter: Just about anything. A hard hat liner is designed to work with the hard hat. Most other items that might be worn under the hat aren’t.]*

3. True or false: Wearing your safety glasses on the end of your nose like bifocals gives you the best of both worlds. You get eye protection and unobstructed vision. *[Note to presenter: This is false. Ask the group why this is false.]*
4. When are amber lens safety glasses appropriate?
5. When are dark lens safety glasses appropriate?
6. When are clear lens safety glasses appropriate?
7. What are UV-rated safety glasses, and what two problems do they address?
8. Is it OK to wear rubber electrical gloves without the leather (or cloth) overglove? Why or why not?
9. What is the proper use for electrical blankets? What are some improper uses?
10. What is the danger in taking your earplugs out several times a day?

Participant's Signature and Date

[illegible]