

Toolbox Talks 2

080: Unsafe Conditions Requiring PPE

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Identify some conditions on this site where PPE is required. Be prepared to discuss them.

What this Safety Talk covers:

This Safety Talk addresses unsafe conditions that require PPE.

Discussion notes:

Point to remember

The wrong question is, “How can I get by with not wearing PPE?” The right question is, “What are the dangers, and what PPE do I need to protect myself?”

How to do a PPE analysis

Step 1. Determine what the dangers are. These are dictated by the conditions you’re exposed to, not by what you are doing while exposed to the conditions.

Step 2. Look at each body area and determine if there’s PPE you can use to protect you from the danger identified in step 1. Start with your head, and work your way down.

Unsafe conditions commonly requiring PPE

- You have to raise your voice to carry on a conversation. If this condition exists, wear hearing protection. Signs aren’t always posted. This is especially true on construction sites or wherever equipment is in temporary use.
- You’re on the job site and not inside an office or break room. If this condition exists, wear your safety glasses. It doesn’t matter if you’re “just walking through” the site to your work area or to a break area. The same logic applies to hardhats.
- You’re in a room where a chemical splash hazard *may* exist. Wear a face shield.
- The air is high in flying fibers, paint fumes, metallic particles, or other lung hazards. Wear the respirator appropriate to the hazard.
- The control panel you’re working in is energized. Wear gloves. Consider sleeves.
- The 480V distribution panel you’re working in is energized. Wear arc flash and blast protection, as required per arc flash and blast analysis. Contact your foreman to have this analysis done.
- The work area contains heavy, loose objects around which foot crush protection is required. Examples include large steel plates or beams. Wear the appropriate foot guards. Standard steel-toed shoes are not substitutes for these.
- You have to enter a very narrow confined space. Wear extraction gear.
- You’re working on scaffolding. Wear fall protection.

Review and discussion

1. What is the wrong question to ask about PPE? The right one?
2. How do you do a PPE analysis? When should you do one?
3. If you have to raise your voice to carry on a conversation, what PPE do you need?

