Personal Protective Equipment Information Sheet

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the clothing and other work accessories that provide a barrier between the worker and a workplace hazard. It includes such things as safety glasses, gloves, hard hats, safety shoes, and fall-protection harness.

The following information is intended to be a guide for determining PPE requirements and covers a wide range of situations, however not all. Good judgment and due diligence is required when determining the necessary PPE requirements for any type of activity that may pose a safety hazard to anyone involved. A full description of these requirements can be found in Nova Scotia's *Occupational Safety General Regulations.*

The following information has been taken, in part, from the guide to Part 3 of the Regulations: http://www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/healthandsafety/docs/OccupSafetyGenRegRefGuide.pdf

Assessing Suitable PPE

Use of PPE is based on:

- the nature of the job/task,
- the location and conditions of the workplace, and
- any hazards that may affect the health and safety of people in the workplace.

PPE Training

Before doing work requiring the use of PPE, individuals must be trained to know:

- when use of the equipment is necessary,
- what type is necessary (particularly if more than one option exists),
- how to wear it,
- its limitations, and
- the proper care and maintenance of the equipment.

Because PPE is considered the last line of defense, it is important that users wear it at all times when they are exposed to the risk. Never allow exemptions for those jobs which take 'just a few minutes'.

How will I know if equipment is CSA approved?

A piece of equipment that meets the CSA standard will have the mark of a nationally recognized testing agency permanently placed on the assembled product. Also, the manufacturer or supplier will have their mark permanently placed on the equipment.

THE HAZARDS AND TYPES OF PPE

Head

Hazard: Head injuries are caused by falling or flying objects, or hitting the head against an object. If these hazards exist then a hard hat must be worn.
Examples: impact from falling or flying objects, risk of head bumping, hair entanglement
PPE: Hard hats that comply with CSA standards. The standards have three (3) classes of hard hat:

- *Class C* - protection against impact and penetration only
- *Class E* - protection against impact, penetration and electrical contact (up to 20,000 volts)
- *Class G* - protection against impact, penetration and electrical contact (up to 2,200 volts)

What do I look for to make sure the headwear is acceptable?
The headwear must be marked with:

- the manufacturer's identity, model number, class of protection, year and month of manufacture,
- size or size range, and
- a warning statement regarding replacing the headwear after a severe impact, no painting, modifications, or decals unless they are approved.

Foot or Skin

Hazard: Work that exposes a person to a foot or skin injury hazard requires the use of appropriate protection.
Examples: falling objects, impact, wet, slipping, cuts and punctures, metal and chemical splash, abrasion, temperature extremes, electric shock, skin infection, disease or contamination
PPE: safety boots and shoes with toe protection, gaiters, leggings, aprons, gloves, mitts, wrist cuffs, armlets

Footwear must comply with CSA standards; toe caps **do not** meet the standard and do not comply with the regulations.

There are three (3) grades of footwear. They are identified by a coloured triangle and the standard offers some suggested uses for the various grades:

- *Grade 3* - red triangle; suggested use, hospital workers
- *Grade 2* - yellow triangle; suggested use, retail workers
- *Grade 1* - green triangle; suggested use, all other work environments

If the footwear also has electrical shock resistance as part of its safety features, it will have a white rectangle on it.

What do I look for to make sure the footwear is acceptable?

Footwear meeting CSA standards must be permanently marked with:

- the manufacturer's name,
- grade of toe protection and any additional protection, and
- month and year of manufacture.

Hazards to skin may be addressed in a number of ways, with the guiding principle being, is the protection adequate to the hazard. If handling caustic or corrosive materials, gloves need to be made of appropriate materials. An apron may also be required for further protection. Leggings are appropriate leg protection against welding sparks. Workers using chain saws will need leg protection resistant to chain saw cuts.

Eyes, Face and Neck

Hazard: If a particular job exposes the worker to a hazard that could irritate or injure the eyes, face or front of the neck, the appropriate protective equipment must be worn and follow CSA standard.
Examples: chemical or metal splash, dust, projectiles, gas and vapour, radiation.
PPE: safety glasses, goggles, face shields, visors

Hearing

Hazard: Where a person is exposed to noise in excess of 85 dB averaged over an 8-hour period, protective equipment should be worn.
Examples: loud noise, extended periods of noise
PPE: earplugs, earmuffs, and canal caps

Take care to select protectors with sufficient, but not excessive, noise reduction to keep noise below the safe limit of 85 dB.

Maximum daily duration in hours	Decibels
8	85
4	88
2	91
1	94
1/2	97
1/4	100

Body

Hazard: Where a person is exposed to the hazard of falling from a work area that is 3 meters or more above the nearest safe surface or water, protective equipment is required.
Examples: heights
PPE: fall-protection harness

Breathing

Hazard: Where a person is exposed to a respiratory hazard that may cause injury or disease.
Examples: dust, vapour, gas, oxygen deficient atmospheres
PPE: disposable filtering facepiece or respirator, half or full face respirators, air fed helmets, breathing apparatus