

Eye Safety Questions

Eye injuries in the workplace are very common. More than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day. About 1 in 10 injuries require one or more missed workdays to recover from. Of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10-20% will cause temporary or permanent vision loss.

Experts believe that the right eye protection could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of eye injuries in accidents.

? What are the common causes of eye injuries?

- a. Flying objects (bits of metal, glass)
- b. Tools
- c. Particles
- d. Chemicals
- e. Harmful radiation
- f. Any combination of these or other hazards

? What is my best defense against an eye injury?

- a. Know the eye safety dangers at work-complete an eye hazard assessment.
- b. Eliminate hazards before starting work. Use machine guarding, work screens, or other engineering controls.
- c. Use proper eye protection

? When should I protect my eyes at work?

You should wear safety eyewear whenever there is a chance of eye injury. Anyone working in or passing through areas that pose eye hazards should wear protective eyewear.

? What type of safety eyewear is available to me?

- a. Safety glasses w/ side protection
- b. Goggles
- c. Face shields
- d. Welding helmets

? What type of safety protection should I wear?

The type of safety eye protection you should wear depends on the hazards in your workplace. If you are working in an area that has particles, flying objects, or dust, you must at least wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields). If you are working with chemicals, you should wear goggles. If you are working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics) you must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed for that task.

? What is the difference between glass, plastic and polycarbonate safety lenses?

All three types of safety lenses meet or exceed the requirements for protecting your eyes.

Glass lenses:

- Are not easily scratched
- Can be used around harsh chemicals
- Can be made in your corrective prescription
- Are sometimes heavy and uncomfortable

Plastic lenses

- Are lighter weight
- Protect against welder splatter
- Are not likely to fog
- Are not as scratch-resistant as glasses

Polycarbonate lenses

- Are lightweight
- Protect against welder splatter
- Are not likely to fog
- Are stronger than glass and plastic
- Are more impact resistant than glass or plastic
- Are not as scratch resistant as glass

? Where can I obtain the proper eye protection at work?

Your first stop for eye protection should be your immediate supervisor. He/she should have some on hand; however, if not, the supervisor should contact the safety department immediately to request needed eye protection. DO NOT begin any work that requires eye protection without first obtaining the proper protection.