

Eye protection

Introduction:

Every day an estimated 1,000 eye injuries occur in American workplaces. The financial cost of these injuries is enormous—more than \$300 million per year in lost production time, medical expenses, and workers' compensation. No dollar figure can reflect the personal toll these accidents take on the injured workers.

Hazards:

- Flying particles. Almost 70 percent of the accidents result from flying or falling objects or sparks striking the eye.
- Contact with chemicals. On average chemicals cause one-fifth of eye injuries.
- Wearing the wrong kind of eye protection for the job.
- Particles trapped in eyebrows or hair, and then falling into the eye after the safety glasses are removed.

Safe procedures:

- Always wear effective eye protection. OSHA standards require that employers provide workers with suitable eye protection.

- Make sure eyewear is the appropriate type for the hazard and properly fitted.
- Safety glasses with side shields are required when there is a hazard from flying particles. A face shield is often required to affectively block particles when grinding.
- Splash goggles or a face shield is required when pouring hazardous chemicals.
- Carefully brush particles out of the hair before removing eye protection.
- Maintain eyewear. Scratched and dirty safety glasses reduce vision, cause glare, and may not offer full protection. They should be replaced.

In conclusion:

It is estimated that 90 percent of eye injuries can be prevented through the use of proper protective eyewear. Nearly three out of every five workers injured were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.