

EYE PROTECTION BASICS

Workplace or job site operations expose some or all of your workers to hazards that can injure their eyes. Flying or falling wood, metal, or stone particles, splashing corrosive or harmful liquids, and/or light radiation from welding or lasers endanger the sight of your workers. Nationwide, hazards injure nearly 1,000 workers' eyes each day. The National Safety Council estimates first aid by a medical professional for an eye injury can cost you \$350; a Workers' Compensation claim payment can cost \$3,600. Downtime can increase your costs while your injured workers recuperate.

OSHA estimates you can prevent 90% of these injuries by using proper eye protection. You can protect a worker's eyes for less than \$10 in many instances. You can select between many types & styles of protective eyewear. A safety equipment supplier can help you select the best ones for your needs. In general, you should select the types that:

- 1) Protect adequately (*see examples shown below*);
- 2) Are reasonably comfortable (*to encourage the workers' wearing it*);
- 3) Fit snugly & do not interfere with the workers' movement;
- 4) Are durable, capable of being disinfected, & easily cleaned;
- 5) Fit over prescription eyewear (*unless made to workers' prescriptions*).

The eyewear shown below at the left offer protection against hazards shown at the right.

Spectacles with sideshield, cup goggles, cover goggles, face shield	Chipping, grinding, masonry work, sanding, riveting, machining
Cup goggles, cover goggles	Woodwork, buffing, dusty conditions
Indirectly vented or non-vented cover goggles, face shield with indirectly or non-vented goggles underneath	Corrosive/caustic or otherwise harmful liquid
Non-vented cover goggles	Irritating mist
Eyewear recommended by safety or laser equipment supplier	Laser equipment
Welding helmet or hand-held welding shield	Electric arc welding
Welding goggles, welding helmet, or hand-held welding shield	Gas welding, torch brazing, torch cutting

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Sources:

IHS Publishing Group, *Compliance Magazine*, Volume 3, Number 5, May 1996

National Safety Council, Accident Prevention Manual for Business & Industry: Engineering & Technology, Tenth Edition, 1992

U.S. Dept. of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration, 29CFR 1910.133, 1994