

Safety Facts: Eye and Face Protection*



Safety eyewear and face shields are the most common method used in industry to protect the eyes and face from injury. Safety eyewear is an essential piece of personal protective equipment (PPE), but all too often workers wear the wrong kind or even worse don't wear it at all.

Eye injuries can be life changing. Consider the implications of vision impairment if you lose the vision in one eye or possibly both.

In many cases eye injury is preventable through the simple act of wearing proper eye protection such as safety glasses or goggles.

In addition a face shield can be worn for an added level of protection to your face but a face shield must never be worn in place of proper eye protection.

Work Safe BC OHS Regulation, Part 8.1-8.10 addresses general requirements and responsibility to provide Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment, this includes hazard assessments and an annual program review. Part 8.14-8.18 addresses specific requirements for Eye and Face Protection in the workplace.



Main Types of Protection Against Associated Risks

Work with your Supervisor to select the appropriate type of safety eye protection available: glasses or goggles.

1. Safety glasses provide impact protection to the front and side of the eye, but they do not offer maximum protection against materials present in the air or that can splash into the face. They provide minimum protection for dust, chips or flying particles that may present a hazard. Safety glasses must be CSA approved and made of polycarbonate or plastic and lenses should have an anti-fog treatment.
 - Safety glasses with prescription lenses are available through optometrists
 - These glasses must comply with the requirements of CSA Z94.3-92 in order to be worn in the workplace and must have side shields.
2. Safety goggles are used in situations where hazardous chemicals or materials could potentially contact your eyes. They provide higher impact protection against dust, acid and chemical splash than safety glasses and can be vented or non-vented depending on the potential hazard.
3. Welding goggles provide protection against harmful radiation when burning, gas welding or arc welding.
4. A face shield protects the full face from injury and they offer the highest impact protection and shelter from spraying chipping, grinding chemicals and blood borne hazards. A face shield is considered a secondary safeguard to protective eyewear it should never be worn without safety glasses or goggles.

Preventative Next Steps

The following steps will minimize the risk of eye injuries in the workplace.

- Complete a hazard assessment to identify situations where workers are handling, or may be exposed to materials, which are likely to injure or irritate the eyes.
- Procedures must be developed for all tasks which identify required eye and face protection.
- Provide properly fitted eye and face protection to all workers exposed to eye and face hazards as required.
- Eye and face protection must be properly stored, adequately maintained and replaced if damaged or excessively worn.



For additional resources visit:

WorksafeBC: [Eye & Face Protection. worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/tools-machinery-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-ppe/types/eye-face-protection](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/tools-machinery-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-ppe/types/eye-face-protection)
CCOHS: www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/prevention/ppe/glasses.html

