

What Types of Hazards Would Require Eye and Face Protection?

According to OSHA, the employer must ensure that employees use appropriate eye and face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards. Eye or face hazards include, but are not limited to, flying particles (grindings, shavings, dusts), molten metal, liquid chemicals (splashes from pouring or processing), acids or caustic liquids, chemical gases or vapors (including mists and aerosols), and potentially injurious light radiation. For impact hazards, the eye protection must include side-impact protection such as side shields on safety glasses or a face shield used with safety glasses. OSHA does allow for the use of detachable side shields if they comply with, as must all protective eye and face devices, the requirements specified by ANSI Z87.1-1989.

What if a worker cannot see because the eye protection assigned is non-prescription, which would probably create an even more hazardous work situation? The employer must require employees who need prescription lenses for work to wear eye protection that incorporates the prescription or that allows for use of prescription lenses. For welding and torch-cutting work, the employer should use the table at 29 CFR 1910.133 (a)(5) to assign a filter lens with the shade number that is appropriate for the light radiation emitted from the particular equipment used.

OSHA PPE regulations are found at 29 CFR 1910.132 through 138.