

Eye safety on construction sites

Construction sites are full of potential eye hazards like flying debris, dust, chemicals, and pressurized tools. According to OSHA, thousands of workers are blinded each year from preventable eye injuries. Proper eye protection and awareness can eliminate many incidents.

Common eye hazards on construction sites

- Flying particles from cutting, grinding, drilling, or chipping
- Dust and airborne debris from demolition or sweeping
- Chemical splashes from solvents, adhesives, or cleaning agents
- Pressurized tools like nail guns or air compressors
- UV exposure from outdoor work

OSHA requirements (29 CFR 1926.102)

- Employers must ensure that each affected employee uses appropriate eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards
- Eye protection must meet ANSI Z87.1 standards
- Side protection, such as side shields or wraparound lenses, is required when there is a hazard from flying objects
- Eye protection must be suitable for the specific hazard, examples include:
 - Goggles for chemical splash
 - Safety glasses with side shields for flying debris
 - Face shields in combination with safety glasses for high-impact tasks

Best practices for workers

- Inspect PPE daily and look for cracks, scratches, or loose parts
- Clean lenses regularly (dirty lenses reduce visibility and increase risk)
- Replace damaged PPE immediately, and never tape or modify broken gear
- Use the right protection for the task
 - Don't rely on sunglasses or prescription glasses unless they're rated for the impact
- Store PPE properly in clean, dry places to avoid damage

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Discussion questions

- What tasks on our site today could pose a risk to your eyes?
- Do you know where to get replacement eye protection if yours is damaged?
- Have you ever had a close call or injury involving your eyes?

Key takeaways

Your eyes are irreplaceable. On the jobsite, they help you stay alert, read hazards, and perform tasks with precision. Off the clock, they let you see the faces of loved ones, take in the world around you, and enjoy hobbies. That's why protecting your eyes isn't just a workplace rule, it's personal responsibility. Whether you're welding, grinding, or simply walking through a busy site, always wear the right eye and face protection.

OSHA Standard Reference: 29 CFR 1926.102 – Eye and Face Protection

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