

EYE PROTECTION

We know seeing is important. Still, it's surprising how many jobs we do without protecting our eyes.

On construction sites, eye hazards are everywhere:

- flying dust and slivers from sawing, chipping, grinding
- dirt and grit blown by the wind
- welding arcs
- ultraviolet radiation from the sun
- sparks and slag from welding and cutting
- abrasives from sandblasting
- splash from chemicals such as cleansers
- pipe and wire sticking out of walls
- ties and wire hanging down from ceilings

We've all had dust and dirt in our eyes. Some of us have even been hit in the eye by chips of wood, concrete or stone.

A little bigger, a little faster and these particles can leave us with limited sight or none at all.

Eye protection is the answer. Sure, you may have problems getting used to it at first. But eye protection can keep you from losing your sight and your ability to do your job.

The basic protection is to wear safety glasses with side shields. If you wear glasses already, then it's no big deal to get prescription safety glasses with side shields. They'll fit and feel like your regular glasses.

If you don't wear glasses, you can buy safety glasses from your local safety shop or go to an optician to get non-prescription safety glasses. Using them is like looking through a window, if they're properly fitted.

Your frame and lenses must meet CSA Standard CAN/CSA Z94.3-92 *Industrial Eye and Face Protectors*.

Safety glasses with side shields are the only ones recommended (although glasses without side shields may be appropriate for certain work situations.) Side shields protect your eyes from particles entering at the side and top of your glasses. The best shields are permanently attached to the frames.

If your safety glasses are fitted properly and your lenses are properly maintained, your sight should not be blurry or distorted. If your head aches or your eyes get tired, you may have a vision problem that requires prescription lenses.

[Where applicable, instructor to review the company policy on the provision and replacement of safety eyewear.]

Some jobs require more than safety glasses with side shields. Remember – the protection should always match the hazard! Safety glasses that protect you from dust may not protect you from splash or radiation.

You should keep your glasses on even when wearing other protection, such as a welding helmet or face shield. Why? Because when you lift up the visor or shields, you may still be exposed to flying chips, dust or other eye hazards.

[Instructor to review any special requirements for their crew – welding helmets, sandblasting hoods, face shields, etc.]

Get your eyes checked every other year to ensure no problems have developed or worsened.

We only have one pair of eyes, it pays to protect them. Make it a point to wear your safety glasses as soon as you set foot on the job site.

[Take a look at any eye protection currently used by crew. Talk about jobs on the project where eye protection should be worn.]

In New Brunswick, the main provisions on eye protection can be found in *General Regulation 91-191* under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, sections 38 and 39. Other sections referring to eye protection include sections 11, 35(2)(3), 36(f), 89(i) and 254(2).

You can find more information on WHSCC's programs and services on the internet at <www.whscc.nb.ca>.

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