

## Workplace Eye Safety

Why is eye safety at work important?

Eye injuries in the workplace are very common. More than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day. About 1 in 10 injuries require one or more missed workdays to recover from. Of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10-20 % will cause temporary or permanent vision loss.

Experts believe that the right eye protection could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of eye injuries in accidents.

What are the common causes of eye injuries?

Common causes for eye injuries are:

Flying objects (bits of metal, glass)

Tools

Particles

Chemicals

Harmful radiation

Any combination of these or other hazards

What is my best defense against an eye injury?

Here are two things you can do to help prevent an eye injury

Eliminate hazards before starting work. Use machine guarding, work screens, or other engineering controls)

Use proper eye protection.

When should I protect my eyes at work?

You must wear safety eyewear whenever there is a chance of eye injury. Anyone working in or passing through areas that pose eye hazards must wear protective eyewear.

What type of safety eyewear is available to me?

Safety eyewear protection includes:

Non-prescription and prescription safety glasses

Goggles

Face shields

Welding helmets

Full-face respirators

What type of safety eye protection should I wear?

The type of safety eye protection you should wear depends on the hazards in your workplace. If you are working in an area that has particles, flying objects, or dust, you must at least wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields). If you are working with chemicals, you should wear goggles. If you are working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics) you must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed for that task.

What is the difference between glass, plastic, and polycarbonate safety lenses?

All three types of safety lenses meet or exceed the requirements for protecting your eyes.

Glass lenses

Are not easily scratched

Can be used around harsh chemicals

Can be made in your corrective prescription

Are sometimes heavy and uncomfortable

Plastic lenses

Are lighter weight

Protect against welding splatter

Are not likely to fog

Are not as scratch-resistant as glass

Polycarbonate lenses

Are lightweight

Protect against welding splatter

Are not likely to fog

Are stronger than glass and plastic

Are more impact resistant than glass or plastic

Are not as scratch resistant as glass