PPE

For the start of the shift: what to check on your PPE before you start, what to do when it is damaged and why rings and bracelets count too.

DURATION
5 minutes

WHO LEADS IT
The supervisor or the safety lead, standing in front of the crew

WHEN TO USE IT
At the start of the shift, when new people start or when the area's PPE changes

WHAT TO BRING
The PPE the area uses: hard hat, safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection and safety shoes

Read it out loud

Good morning, everyone. Today's topic is the gear you are wearing right now: hard hat, safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection and safety shoes. We use it every day, and that is exactly why we stop noticing it.

PPE is the last barrier. Before it come machine guards, procedures and the way the area is laid out. PPE is there for when those fail, so it has to be complete and in good shape at the moment nobody expects anything to happen.

Picture a scene that repeats in many plants. Someone wears their safety glasses on their forehead because they fog up, walks past the grinder in the next cell and a chip hits their eye. The glasses were two inches away.

Before you start, check your gear: a hard hat without cracks and with its suspension complete, glasses without scratches that block your view, gloves without holes and right for the task, clean earplugs and shoes with the toe cap and sole in good condition.

If something is damaged, report it right away. Don't patch it with tape, don't borrow someone else's and don't keep working with it: damaged PPE is not used, and the company replaces it.

And something many people forget: rings, bracelets, chains and loose hair are a hazard too, especially near rotating parts. A ring that catches can do more damage than the impact the glove protects you from.

To wrap up: PPE protects while it is on, complete and in good shape, from the start of the shift to the end.

What OSHA says

- 29 CFR 1910.132 requires the employer to assess the workplace hazards and select PPE for them (1910.132(d)(1)) and to train each employee in when PPE is necessary, which PPE, how to put it on, adjust it and take it off, its limitations and its care (1910.132(f)(1)); the employee shows they understand before doing the work (1910.132(f)(2)).
- Defective or damaged PPE shall not be used (1910.132(e)), and in general the employer provides it at no cost to employees (1910.132(h)(1)).

Source: OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.132 (Personal protective equipment, general requirements), current text. Reviewed on October 29, 2026.

Questions for the crew

1. **What do you check on your PPE before starting?**
   Expected answer: That the hard hat has no cracks, the glasses let me see clearly, the gloves have no holes and fit the task, the earplugs are clean and the shoes are in good shape. Defective or damaged PPE is not used (1910.132(e)).

2. **Who pays for the PPE?**
   Expected answer: In general, the employer provides it at no cost to employees (1910.132(h)(1)). One exception: non-specialty safety-toe shoes and prescription safety glasses the employer allows to be worn off the job (1910.132(h)(2)).

3. **Why is PPE the last barrier?**
   Expected answer: Because guards, procedures and the layout come first. The employer assesses the hazards before choosing the PPE (1910.132(d)(1)) and trains each person in when it is needed, how to wear it and its limits (1910.132(f)(1)).

Sign-in sheet

Date _____ **Area** _____ **Led by** _____

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