

Personal Protective Equipment

Safe At Work Ontario
Enforcement > Compliance > Partnership >



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) reduces or prevents a worker's exposure to occupational health and safety hazards. The equipment acts as a barrier to protect workers from blows to the body, loud noises, heat, chemicals, infections, and electrical and other hazards. PPE can refer to protective clothing, helmets, shoes, goggles, respirators and other safety gear worn or used by workers.

In October 2011, the Ministry of Labour will focus on PPE during an enforcement blitz at industrial and health care workplaces across Ontario.

Some duties of workplace parties

Employers, supervisors and workers have duties and responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. Workplace obligations include, but are not limited, to the following:

An **employer** must:

- Ensure the PPE provided is used by the worker [OHSA clause 25(1)(d)]
- Provide and maintain in good condition all prescribed PPE [clauses 25(1)(a) & (b)]

A **supervisor** must:

- Ensure a worker wears the PPE required by the OHSA and its regulations [clause 27(1)(a)]
- Ensure the worker uses the PPE required by the employer [clause 27(1)(b)]

A **worker** must:

- Wear any PPE required by the employer [clause 28(1)(b)]
- Report to the employer or supervisor any known missing or defective PPE [clause 28(1)(c)]
- Not remove or disable any PPE required by the employer or by the supervisor [clause 28(1)(d)]

Priority areas

Although the blitz will mainly focus on head, eye and foot protection at industrial and health care workplaces, inspectors may also address other types of PPE, including fall, respiratory, skin and hearing protection.

Inspectors will check whether the requirements related to the selection, use and care of PPE, and worker training in the use of PPE are being met by all workplace parties, as specified in the OHSA.

Industrial workplaces

In industrial workplaces, inspectors will focus on PPE that protects the eye, head and foot, and address any other hazards they may find.

Inspectors will focus on safety gear used by workers in the following sectors:

- wood and metal fabrication
- vehicle sales and service
- food and beverage
- wholesalers
- education

Health care workplaces

The blitz will also focus on hospitals, long-term care homes and homes for residential care. The blitz will check for safety gear being worn or used by non-clinical staff in the following departments of health care workplaces:

- dietary services (nutrition and food services/kitchen)
- housekeeping/environmental services
- maintenance shops, the central sterile supply and laundry departments of a health care workplace

Inspectors will look for equipment that protects the:

- head
- eyes and face
- lungs
- hearing
- hands and feet

Sections 10 through 15 of the Health Care and Residential Facilities regulation (O. Reg. 67/93) – regarding PPE – will apply to applicable workplaces.

More information

- Ministry of Labour: www.labour.gov.on.ca
- Health & Safety Ontario: www.healthandsafetyontario.ca
- Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW): www.ohcow.on.ca
- Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC): www.whsc.on.ca

Call toll-free

Call 1-877-202-0008 anytime to report workplace health and safety incidents or for general inquiries about health and safety at the workplace.

Note: *This document does not constitute legal advice and has no legal effect. To determine your rights and obligations under the OHS Act and its regulations, please contact your legal counsel or refer to the legislation at: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm*

Inspectors will apply and enforce the OHS Act and its regulations based on the facts as they may find them in the workplace. This fact sheet does not affect their enforcement discretion in any way.