

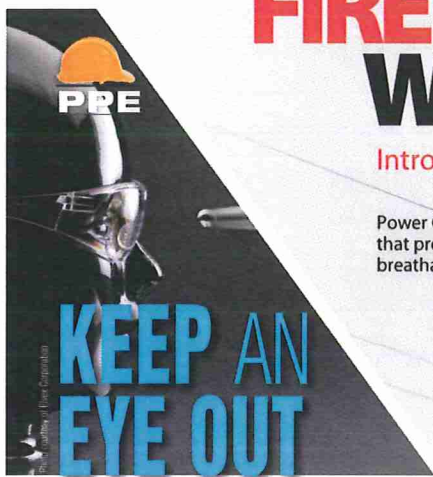
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Set goals for better eye protection

By FRED RAVETTO

OSHA estimates that 90 percent of eye injuries can be prevented. So why do eye injuries continue to occur in the workplace?

Real-world feedback from safety and health professionals provides us with valuable lessons learned. Apply these goals to your safety program for better eye injury protection.

Make a goal that workers wear their eyewear 100 percent of the time by considering these factors in eyewear selection:

Weight: Safety glasses designed to be “ultra lightweight” are so comfortable, you hardly know they are on. When the lens weight is below 25 grams, it is considered ultra lightweight, compared to traditional glasses weighing 36 grams in weight (40 percent heavier than ultra lightweight glasses). If safety glasses are needed for long periods each day, weight is a major factor to consider.

Head comfort: Soft, flexible temples will “flex” to fit safely and comfortably to a thin, midsize or wide head. A high degree of flexibility reduces pressure on the worker’s head and provides a comfortable fit without pinching or squeezing. Some frame designs accomplish flexing with a thin temple and soft materials, while others feature dual-injected TPR temples.

Face comfort: Whenever practical, avoid the use of straps to create pressure against the worker’s face. The worker will often take the goggle off and allow it to hang around his neck to relieve the strap pressure (leaving the eyes unprotected). Newly introduced foam lined goggle/spectacles are designed with a combination of temples (for comfort) and a foam lining (to seal the gap between a worker’s face and the lens). The temples are adjustable to insure a snug fit without the excess face pressure of straps. The use of a close cell foam adds to the comfort and reduces absorption of sweat or body oils. Foam liners are not the solution for all applications, but they provide comfort for long hours of use.

Nose comfort: A non-slip, soft rubber nose bridge or pads provide added comfort, especially in warm environments.

Make a goal to maximize the worker’s field of vision by considering that frames and temples can restrict vision. Foam-lined glasses that ignore field of vision as a design parameter can create tunnel vision. There are many products on the market where style has taken priority over field of vision.

Choose safety glasses that are designed to maximize field of vision. Typically, they fall into these categories:

Frameless/mono lens glasses that use the same polycarbonate material for the lens and temples and offer an unrestricted field of vision. (See photo SG-18.)

Half-frame or full-frame glasses designed with ample lens curvature and lens wrap can help insure a wide field of vision.

Foam lined glasses designed with ample lens curvature and lens wrap will insure a wide field of vision. (See photo GG-40.)


Make a goal that coverage and protection are maximized by ensuring safety glasses include these features. The following factors maximize coverage and protection from flying debris, dust and splashes:

Side protection: ANSI Z87 compliant safety glasses vary dramatically in the amount of side protection provided. When I inspected a number of designs on the market, I was surprised to find that some stylish designs, while looking good, offered limited side protection, while other well-designed glasses provided as much as ¾” additional side protection beyond the ANSI specification. (See photo.)

Foam lined goggles/spectacles: These provide an extra degree of eye protection compared to safety glasses. The foam lining seals the gap between a worker’s face and the lens, keeping particles away from the worker’s eyes.

Better impact protection: Today there is even the option of upgrading the impact protection rating that safety glasses provide your workforce. The U.S. Military established a test standard for impact velocity that is four times the standard of ANSI Z87.1-2010. This test standard is Mil-PRF-31013 V0 ballistic test, and the requirement is 640 to 660 feet/second impact velocity protection compared to 150 fps test requirement for

ANSI Z87.1

Help keep your workforce protected by adding achievable goals to your safety program. Keep your eyes open to new safety glasses designs and innovations which will help you and your workers meet your safety goals. 

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