

May 2009 Safety Meeting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

During 2008, many companies made additions to their Personal Protective Gear (PPE) standard operating procedures. The changes included shoe, boot or heel grounders for controlling static electricity and the use of face shields when transferring liquid propane and lighting appliances.

Using personal protective equipment (PPE) requires hazard awareness and knowledge of the equipment's purpose, limitations, proper fit and maintenance.

OSHA in 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) requires the use of personal protective equipment during operations that present the risk of injury to employees when that risk cannot be eliminated by engineering or process procedures. Under OSHA regulations, the employer is responsible for:

- Determining the use and selection of PPE;
- Training employees in the proper use and care of PPE;
- Documenting the use and employee training of PPE;

The most commonly used PPE is designed to protect the hands and eyes. Your company may require the use of additional PPE. Always follow your company's standard operating procedures regarding the use of PPE.

Hand Protection

Proper hand protection requires wearing gloves that are suitable for the task that is being performed. Do not think that one pair of gloves will suffice for all tasks. During propane transfer operations, a suitable vinyl or comparable glove should be used. Proper fit is important. Gloves should not be overly tight-fitting and should be easy to remove if they become filled or saturated with liquid propane. Mechanic's gloves are useful in certain situations for improved dexterity. Gloves should not be worn around moving machinery where there is a possibility of getting caught and your hands being pulled into moving parts.

Eye Protection

Eye protection cannot be overemphasized. Most companies provide and require such protection for certain types of work. The use of approved safety glasses, goggles, or a face shield can minimize risks. Purchase this equipment from reputable sources. Don't take chances on poor quality equipment.

Foot Protection

Foot injuries can occur from a variety of tasks. Any work operation that can injure a foot requires the wearing of appropriate footwear. Safety shoes may be required for propane cylinder delivery personnel and service techs since they provide protection when

handling heavy cylinders, equipment and materials. Tennis shoes and flip-flops are not recommended.

Head Protection

Head protection is mandatory in a number of propane companies. Hard hats may be mandatory when making deliveries at construction sites. They should be used when a worker is exposed to the possibility of being hit on the head with a falling object or where a worker could be hit by a swinging object.

Hearing Protection

Noise levels above 85 decibels can damage hearing. Two types of hearing protection are earplugs and acoustical earmuffs. Hearing protection is needed when noise makes it difficult to communicate verbally with other workers or when steady or impulse noises louder than 85 decibels occur. If you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone less than two feet away, you and other workers in the area need hearing protection.

Work Clothing

Company standard operating procedures (SOPs) vary with regard to work clothes. In some situations and work environments, selection of work clothing is an important safety matter, especially when working around flammable liquids and gases.

- Clothing made of natural fiber such as cotton or wool may provide more protection in the event of fire than do non-flame retardant synthetic fibers;
- Cotton fibers also help reduce static electricity;
- Long-sleeved shirts and jackets provide more protection than short-sleeved;
- Some manufacturers sew warning labels into their outerwear to identify fabrics not considered suitable for work around flammables;
- Some companies require transport drivers to wear flame-retardant jumpsuits when making product transfers within their facilities;

Class Discussion

Ask your employees to share incidents where the use or non-use of PPE contributed positively or negatively to workplace safety. Discuss ways (strategies or incentives) to enhance workers' use of PPE.

Closing

If you ask and answer the following questions or use statements like these several times a week, your safety attitude may be alive and well:

- Can we make this job safer?
- How can someone be injured here?
- Stop! Go get the right tool.
- This stuff is a pain to wear, but without it, there's no other protection.
- I wear these glasses all the time, just so that I don't forget.

Ultimately, your actions will define your safety attitude. But both words and actions have an effect on your safety attitude and that can affect the safety attitude of those around you---even your own family.

May 2009 Test Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Name _____

Date _____

Instructions: Read and answer each of the following questions. When complete, grade the test and review incorrect answers so each employee is “armed” with the correct answers before they leave the training.

- (1) Under the OSHA regulations in selecting personal protective equipment, the employer is responsible for:
 - A. documentation of employee PPE use and training
 - B. training employees in the proper use and care of PPE
 - C. determining the use and selection of PPE
 - D. all of the above

- (2) Hearing protection is needed when noise makes it difficult to communicate verbally with other workers or when steady or impulse noises louder than _____ decibels occur:
 - A. 55
 - B. 75
 - C. 85
 - D. OSHA sets no decibels requirements

- (3) Gloves should not be worn around moving machinery where there is a chance of the gloves getting caught and the hands being pulled into moving parts.
 - A. True
 - B. False

- (4) Long-sleeved shirts with the sleeves rolled down do not provide protection to the arms.
 - A. True
 - B. False

- (5) Because proper cylinder delivery personnel handle heavy cylinders and equipment, it may be a requirement that they wear safety shoes.
 - A. True
 - B. False

(6) A safety guide to remember is if you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone less than ____ feet away, you should be wearing hearing protection.

- A. 8
- B. 4
- C. 6
- D. 2

(7) Properly fitted gloves should not be overly tight.

- A. True
- B. False

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Answer Key

1. D
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. D
7. A