

Eye and Face Protection

You Can See the Results

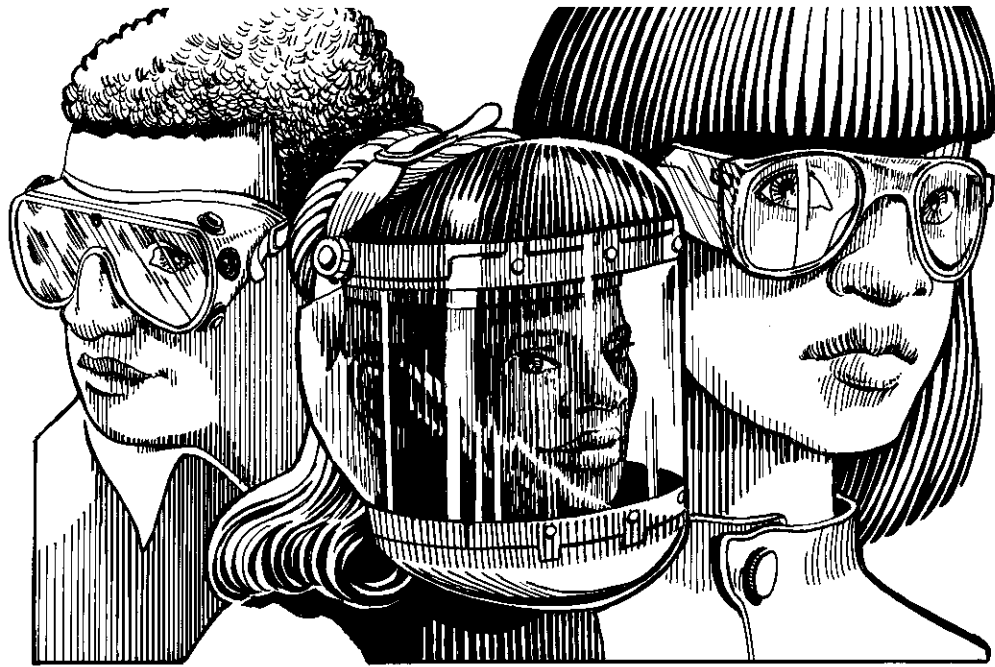
Think what it would be like to do your job without your eyesight. When you think about it, you will probably agree with most experts that eye protection is the most important protective gear you can wear. Yet year after year nine out of ten eye injuries on the job could have been prevented if the victim had been wearing appropriate eye protection. But how do you know if you need eye protection? The answer is simple: You need it if anything in your work area could fly into your eyes.

High Impact

When we think of eye injury, we usually think of something large striking the eye from in front—perhaps a board thrown back by a saw or a falling object or flying chunk of rock. If you're around this sort of hazard, you need high-impact protection—safety glasses or goggles with lenses of polycarbonate, the most impact-resistant material used in glasses. In choosing protective eyewear, remember that while goggles offer overall protection, safety glasses may be the best choice if your job requires plenty of side vision.

High-Speed Particles

By far the most common eye hazards and causes of eye injury in the shop are fast-moving small particles, such as dust and debris from sanding, grinding, chipping and similar operations. A fast-moving particle smaller than a grain of sand can cause a great deal of damage to an unprotected eye. Even relatively slow-moving fine particles such as dust can scratch the eye's surface. When choosing safety glasses or goggles for this type of hazard, you have to weigh impact resistance against scratch resistance. Plastic and polycarbonate lenses are



Most eye injuries can be prevented by the use of eye protection. If you work around flying objects or particles, or if you are exposed to chemical splashes, use eye protection.

highly impact-resistant but less scratch-resistant than glass lenses. Glass lenses will shatter on high impact but resist scratching from dust and grit better than other lenses do. Some polycarbonate lenses are coated with a scratch-resistant surface to protect against both high-impact and fine-particle hazards.

Chemicals, Fumes and Heat

If you are working around dangerous chemicals, you need goggles that form a snug seal around your face and have hooded ventilators or, in extreme danger, no ventilators. Such goggles need to be specially coated to prevent fogging. The best protection against heat is a faceshield, typically an acetate or other flexible plastic visor-type shield that covers the face and neck. Extreme heat or concentrated light may require

the protection of a welding helmet. Faceshields should be used with other eye protection, never alone.

Take Responsibility

If your company provides or recommends a certain kind of eye protection, it's likely that they selected that eye protection for good reasons and provide guidelines for its use based on the experience of others in the industry. Wearing eye protection benefits both you and your company.

Learn what first aid is available in case of eye injury and where to go to get first aid quickly. Wear the right eye protection and you may become a safety statistic—one of the 80,000 people who escaped injury in industrial accidents because they wore eye protection. 