



**A STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
for**

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# **Protective Clothing and Equipment**

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U.S. General Services Administration  
Safety and Environmental Management Team  
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## INTRODUCTION

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed for the purpose of outlining the general procedures for the purchase, issue, and care of the more common types personal protective clothing and equipment (PPE) issued to GSA employees.

This SOP applies to all GSA employees who are assigned work where PPE is required under the provisions of Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1910 (29 CFR 1910), Subpart I, Personal Protective Equipment. Responsible GSA managers/supervisors should also consult the GSA Occupational Safety and Health Program Handbook (ADM P 5940.1A) for information relative to the purchase, issue, and use of PPE.

This SOP does not apply to persons who are not employed by GSA (e.g., contractor employees). GSA managers/supervisors are not expected to furnish PPE to non-GSA employees. Questions regarding this matter should be directed to the regional OSH Program Office.

Due to the special nature of the hazards involved, this SOP is not applicable to respiratory protection devices. The GSA SOP "Selection, Care and Use of Respiratory Protection, Part I: General," and "... Part II: Maintenance Work with Asbestos," the applicable OSHA standards will be referenced to comply with required respiratory protection procedures.

A number of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards apply to protective clothing and equipment. Every regional OSH Program Office must have a copy of ANSI standards referenced in this SOP and in 29 CFR 1910, Subpart I. All GSA workplaces where PPE is required must have a current copy of 29 CFR 1910 available to employees.

OSHA standards may be obtained from the local OSHA Area Office or purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. ANSI standards may be purchased from American National Standards Institute, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018.

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General Services Administration  
Heartland Region

**PERSONEL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

1. **POLICY**. Protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, and extremities; protective clothing; respiratory devices; and protective shield and barriers, shall be provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition wherever it is necessary by reason of hazards of processes or environment, chemical hazards, radiological hazards, or mechanical irritants encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or impairment in the function of any part of the body through absorption, inhalation, or physical contact (29 CFR 1910.132).

2. **SCOPE**. This SOP applies to all GSA employees who are assigned work where PPE is required. This SOP does not apply to persons who are not employed by GSA, such as contractor employees.

3. **REFERENCES**.

a. OSHA 29 CFR 1910, Subpart I, Personal Protective Equipment.

b. GSA Occupational Safety and Health Program Handbook (ADM P 5940.1A).

c. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard Z87.1, Occupational and Educational Eye and Face Protection.

d. OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure.

e. ANSI Standard Z89.1, Protective Headwear for Industrial Workers.

f. ANSI Standard Z41, Safety-Toe Footwear.

g. OSHA 29 CFR 1910, Subpart G, Radiation.

h. OSHA 29 CFR 1910, Subpart Q, Welding.

i. OSHA 29 CFR 1910, Subpart Z, Asbestos.

j. OSHA 29 CFR 1910.145, Specifications for Accident Prevention Signs and Tags.

4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS. The type of PPE provided by GSA must be based upon a baseline (initial) occupational safety and health (OSH) survey. Changes in the workplace which would affect the selection and/or use of PPE shall require an updated OSH survey to be conducted. These OSH surveys are required for every GSA workplace, regardless of the type of work performed, under the provisions of the GSA Occupational Safety and Health Program Handbook (ADM P 5940.1A), Chapter 2-5.

a. PPE will not be used as a permanent measure if there are other methods available which would reduce or eliminate the hazard (e.g., engineering and/or administrative controls).

b. Prior to the initial purchase of any type of PPE, the responsible GSA manager must ensure coordination with the regional OSH Program Office takes place. The OSH Program Office will approve the initial purchase request for PPE required by 29 CFR 1910 and based upon recommendations of the OSH survey report. Thereafter, unless there is a change in the task or procedure, the regional OSH Program Office need not approve stock replenishment requests for PPE.

c. The issuance of PPE to employees as a convenience is **NOT** permitted. Use of such devices must be in accordance with the procedures prescribed in 29 CFR 1910 or the OSH survey report for the particular hazard(s) involved.

d. GSA managers should not impose a monetary restriction on the cost per item of PPE. Monetary restrictions on the purchase of PPE is not permitted in accordance with ADM P 5940.1A, Chapter 2-7c. Sound fiscal judgement and reasoning by managers must prevail when considering the cost of PPE. Also, employees are not to be charged for PPE issued to them. The cost of the PPE will be made available from local GSA activity operating funds.

e. GSA managers must not allow employees to use their personal funds to purchase PPE to be used in the GSA workplace. The cost of purchase, maintenance, and replacement is the responsibility of GSA, not the individual employee.

f. None of the above requirements preclude a GSA manager from entering into a contract agreement for the purchase of PPE (e.g., safety shoes). However, the specifications of the contract will include the requirements stated in this SOP, 29 CFR 1910, applicable ANSI standards, and ADM P 5940.1A. Other GSA contract criteria will apply where applicable.

5. PPE ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION.

a. PPE Assessment. As a result of the OSH surveys outlined in paragraph 4, above, based upon hazards found or which are likely to be present which necessitate the use of PPE, a report shall be issued which:

- (1) Identifies the workplace evaluated,
- (2) Identifies the various tasks to be performed in that workplace, and
- (3) Lists the appropriate PPE for each of those tasks.

b. PPE Certification. The report, above, shall verify that the required workplace hazard assessment has been performed through a written certification. This written certification shall identify:

- (1) The workplace evaluated,
- (2) The individual, by name and signature, certifying that the evaluation has been performed,
- (3) The date(s) of the hazard assessment, and
- (4) The document as a certification of hazard assessment.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. Facility Managers. Each manager of a GSA activity having a valid need for utilizing PPE is responsible for implementation of the PPE program within his or her facility.

### b. Regional OSH Program Offices.

(1) Ensure all GSA workplaces are provided OSH surveys, as prescribed by ADM P 5940.1A.

(2) Ensure the PPE assessment and certification is completed for all GSA workplaces where it is required.

(3) Assist responsible facility managers and supervisors in identifying and selecting appropriate PPE for the hazards encountered by GSA employees in those workplaces where PPE is needed.

(4) Assist managers and supervisors in their PPE training effort and ensure that the OSH training meets the intent of the various occupational safety and health standards.

c. Supervisors.

(1) Supervisory personnel must ensure the required PPE is available when it is needed. Employees will **NOT** be tasked or allowed to perform work if the required PPE is not available, regardless of reason.

(2) Supervisors must be held accountable to ensure that the required employee training in the use, care, and storage of PPE is conducted. To this end, supervisors:

(a) Are responsible for ensuring each employee under their control has received adequate training on the care, use, and storage of all protective equipment before use.

(b) Must never "ASSUME" an employee knows what protection is required and how to use same for any time of task. If PPE is necessary by reason of task or exposure, the employee must demonstrate to the supervisor his or her knowledge of the care, use, and handling of PPE criteria.

(c) Should have access to the regional OSH Program Office professional(s) expertise in order to comply with this important program element.

(3) Frequently, but not less than quarterly, supervisors must inspect all PPE issued to GSA employees under their control. PPE must be in a good state of repair, clean as required, and properly stored. Defective items will be taken out of service until repaired or replaced.

(4) Any defective PPE noted by the supervisor will be corrected immediately. There is **NO** reason for a supervisor to allow a known defective item of PPE to exist in the workplace.

(5) The practice of allowing defective PPE to "lie around" until discarded will be discouraged. Defective devices will be removed from service and the possibility of use eliminated.

(6) Supervisors will rigidly enforce the proper use of PPE by GSA employees.

(7) Supervisors must allow visitors in areas requiring PPE unless the required protection is available and used by the visitors.

d. Employees.

(1) The use of PPE by GSA employees is **NOT** a matter of choice. Protective devices required by GSA order or by OSHA standard(s) will be used or worn while the applicable work is being performed.

(2) Before and after each use, the employee will examine each item of PPE to ensure the item is serviceable. Any defect in the protective device will be reported **immediately** to the responsible supervisor. Job-required PPE which is not in a good state of repair may be grounds for the employee to postpone the work pending issuance of PPE in good condition. However, this is true only to the extent that the employee has reported the condition(s) to his/her supervisor.

(3) While employees are not to pay for PPE for the job, they are expected to exercise reasonable care of the protective devices in their custody.

(4) Proper care, cleaning, and storing of PPE is considered the user's responsibility.

(5) For work-related tasks, employees will use only the PPE issued to them by the responsible supervisor.

7. EVIDENCE OF ISSUANCE AND TRAINING.

a. Each GSA supervisor having authority to issue PPE to GSA employees must maintain a record of the date issued, type of protection issued, and name of employee to whom the device was issued. When an employee is terminated, resigns, or is for whatever reason no longer a GSA employee, the record of issue need not be retained under the provisions of this SOP.

b. No PPE will be issued to a GSA employee until the employee has received proper training on the device(s) issued. Each GSA supervisor having authority to issue PPE must maintain a record of the date of training, reason for the training, and the name of employee trained.

c. Evidence of compliance with a and b, above, must be made to OSH survey inspectors upon request. GSA employee training records shall be in accordance with current GSA training criteria.

8. EYE AND FACE PROTECTION.

a. Protective eye and face protection is required where there is a **reasonable probability** that an employee injury can be prevented by use of such protection. In such cases, the responsible GSA manager will furnish the protection; responsible GSA supervisors will enforce the use of the protection; and GSA employees will use the protection as required.

b. Employees who work in eye-impact hazard areas, and who wear prescription glasses (lenses) must be issued prescription safety glasses with side shields. The use of non-safety prescription lenses in an eye hazard workplace is prohibited.

c. Eye and face protectors must meet the following criteria:

(1) They must provide adequate protection against the particular hazards for which they are required to be worn. The two most common types of injuries to the eye are from chemical splash and particle impact. Safety glasses with side shields are designed to protect against particles. They are not intended to protect against chemical splash because they do not provide a seal around the eyes. Goggles can be designed to protect against impact only or against both chemical and impact. Face shields are usually designed to protect against both chemical and impact hazards. Other jobs may require specialized equipment, such as welding or lasers. Check the manufacturer's literature to ensure the correct eyewear is utilized.

(2) They must be reasonably comfortable when worn under the designated conditions.

(3) They must fit snugly and must not unduly interfere with the movements of the wearer.

(4) They must be durable.

(5) They must be capable of being disinfected.

(6) They must be easy to clean.

(7) They must be kept clean and in good repair.

d. Employees whose vision requires the use of corrective lenses, and who are required to wear eye protection in the course of their jobs, must wear goggles, spectacles, and or face shields of one of the following types:

(1) Spectacles whose protective lenses provide optical correction.

(2) Goggles that can be worn over corrective spectacles without disturbing the adjustment of the spectacles.

(3) Goggles that incorporate corrective lenses mounted behind the protective lenses.

(4) Full face shields to be worn over the spectacles.

e. Eye protection must be distinctly marked to facilitate identification of the manufacturer.

f. When limitations or precautions are indicated by the manufacturer, they must be transmitted to the user and care taken to see that such limitations and precautions are strictly observed.

g. Design, construction, testing, and use of devices for eye and face protection must be in accordance with the current edition of the ANSI Standard for Occupational and Educational Eye and Face Protection (Z87.1).

h. Accident prevention signs are an essential part of the supervisor's effort to prevent eye injuries. Warning signs requiring the use of eye protection shall be posted in appropriate locations, see paragraph 14, below.

9. **HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM**. Hearing loss poses a unique and very severe problem for employees. Unlike traumatic injuries, loss of hearing can be a gradual process over long periods of time. Often, an employee will not have the slightest notion that he/she is experiencing a hearing loss due to the work environment. Furthermore, without the benefit of medical advice, and competent OSH surveys, the type of protection being used may not provide the protection required. Therefore, the regional OSH Program Office must treat each GSA workplace having a potential for hearing loss problems as a separate case. The provisions of 29 CFR 1910.95 must be applied according to each case.

10. **OCCUPATIONAL HEAD PROTECTION**. Helmets for the protection of heads of employees from impact and penetration from falling and flying objects and from limited electric shock and burns must meet the requirements of the current edition of ANSI Standard Z89.1.

11. **OCCUPATIONAL FOOT PROTECTION**. Safety-toe footwear for the protection of employees must meet the requirements and specifications in the current edition of ANSI Standard Z41. There is a wide selection of footwear available to protect against hazards such as: impact, punctures, chemicals, electrical charges, etc. The important thing to remember is no footwear

will protect against every hazard. Check with the manufacturer's literature to ensure the appropriate protection is utilized by employees.

12. **OCCUPATIONAL HAND PROTECTION**. Gloves are available to protect against chemicals, heat or cold, cuts and abrasion; improve grips; etc. Always check with the manufacturer's literature to ensure the appropriate protection is utilized by employees.

a. Gloves utilized for chemical protection are the most difficult type of PPE to understand and select. There are thousands of chemicals used in the workplace and gloves offer protection against a select few.

b. Gloves must be selected based upon the specific chemicals which will be encountered. A glove that will protect against toluene will not necessarily protect against methyl ethyl ketone (MEK). The regional OSH Program Office will assist in the selection of any PPE, especially chemical protective gloves.

c. Once a glove is exposed to a chemical, the chemical will begin penetrating the material. How quickly the glove material is penetrated varies depending on the glove material and the chemical involved. This process can happen quickly (e.g., a few minutes) or take hours or even days. Washing the gloves will not stop the process. Use of disposable gloves often is preferred because proper decontamination of reusable items is often difficult.

d. Gloves which show visible or physical signs of degradation such that they will not offer the protection for which they were designed shall be replaced immediately. Also, gloves used to protect against chemical hazards will not be used beyond the manufacturer's recommended use time, regardless of lack of visible or physical signs of degradation.

13. **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**. A separate Heartland Region SOP for respiratory protection has been developed; refer to that SOP for requirements in this area.

14. **SPECIFIC TASK PROTECTION**.

a. Numerous other criteria concerning PPE for specific tasks are contained in various OSHA standards referenced in paragraph 3 of this SOP. Supervisors must review the specific standards and GSA SOP criteria for the work to be performed and ensure the proper PPE are available and used. Assistance and guidance is available by contacting the regional OSH Program Office.

b. It must also be noted that employees of different occupations may not necessarily use the same type protection. For example:

(1) Electrical workers safety shoes are not the same as custodial worker safety shoes.

(2) Workers who are required to wear head protection around electrical wires do not use the same helmets as laborers on a construction site.

(3) Gloves used by mechanics who clean machine parts are not the same gloves used by workers who work on high voltage electrical equipment.

(4) Respirators used by persons performing asbestos work are not the same as used by spray painters. And neither of these are the same as used by the military for protection against chemical or biological agents.

**NOTE: Furthermore PPE must not inhibit or affect the dexterity of the individual performing the task.**

15. ACCIDENT PREVENTION SIGNS. In GSA workplaces considered permanent in nature (e.g., carpenter shop, welding shop, chiller room, battery charging areas, metalworking shops), provisions will be made for prominent use of accident prevention signs (danger/caution/warning). The provisions of OSHA 29 CFR 1910.145 will govern sign specifications (size, color, wording).

a. Where an eye injury potential exists due to the nature of the work performed, proper accident prevention signs must be prominently posted on the equipment creating the hazard regardless if the equipment is portable or permanent.

b. Entrances to all permanent workplaces having unsafe or unhealthful working conditions, regardless of the type of hazard, must be prominently posted with the appropriate accident prevention sign(s).