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 **PPE­  PROTECTION**

Hard hats, safety glasses, face shields, hearing protectors, gloves and safety shoes! What do all of these items have in common? They are all various forms of personal protective equipment, designed to help protect you from serious injury. Yet, data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for a one year period show:

- 84% of workers who sustained head injuries were not wearing hard hats;

- 99% of workers who suffered face injuries were not wearing face protection;

- 60% of workers who sustained eye injuries were not wearing eye protection;

- 77% of workers who suffered foot injuries were not wearing safety shoes or boots;

Personal protective equipment is designed to protect you, but it only functions if you wear it. There is nothing automatic about eye protection. Safety glasses are of value to you only when you use them as they are meant to be used.

A hard hat is a beautifully engineered product—it is designed to protect your head from serious injury, but only if you wear it.

Hearing protectors are proven effective in preventing hearing loss, but if not worn, or worn incorrectly, they can't do their job. Just like those gloves you are required to wear when doing certain jobs or handling specific chemicals, they only work if you use them.

Sometimes it may seem like a lot of trouble to take a few seconds to obtain and put on protective equipment for a job that may only take a short time to complete, such as that small grinding task that may only take a few seconds. Did you know that a 10-inch diameter grinding wheel, traveling 1,850 revolutions per minute (rpm) will throw a particle 55 mph toward your face? If your eye were located three feet from the grinding wheel, the particle can strike your eye in 0.04 seconds.

Do your body a favor, obtain the protective equipment your job, and hopefully you demand, and wear it properly.