



ToolBox Talks from the SWPA Safety Committee

PPE...It's Time For A Year-end Checkup!

A year end checkup will ensure you are getting the most from your PPE. Here's what you need to know about keeping your gear in good shape.

Even if you wear personal protective equipment (PPE) while working in hazardous situations, it can mean nothing if the PPE you wear is damaged or it doesn't meet quality standards. Whether it's a reflective vest or safety boots, it's important to have the right kind of protection for the job you're undertaking.

Each time you use PPE you should inspect it for signs of deterioration and verify its structural integrity.

Are there any visible signs of wear and tear? Has the item passed its expiration date?

PPE is generally defined as equipment or clothing that is worn or held by a person at work to protect him or her from health and safety risks. These items may include gloves, safety shoes, safety helmets, eye protection, hearing protection, hand, arm and body protection, respiratory protection, high-visibility clothing, and safety harnesses.

The gear must also be in good working order. That's why it's vital to ensure that your PPE is checked regularly and maintained correctly. Do a year-end checkup and set up regular schedules for PPE checks for your crew.

Store your PPE correctly, Repair damage as soon as it occurs & establish a plan for discarding/repairing faulty gear.

Here's what to check...

- Cuts, nicks or tears
- Broken fibers, cracks, excessive hardness or brittleness, or burnt, charred or melted fibers, which may indicate heat damage
- Missing straps
- Undue stretching
- Modifications by previous users
- Damaged stitching
- Distortion (twists, bends)
- Rough or sharp edges
- Rust, corrosion, cracks or breaks
- Broken or distorted grommets
- All parts are in working condition

Inspecting your PPE ensures it ready to use when you need it.



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EQUIPMENT

Toolbox Talks are provided as a courtesy to SWPA members. Please remember they are to assist you in developing a safety plan. Keep in mind OSHA, Department of Labor and Insurance requirements may change over time and it is your responsibility to make sure your safety plan is up to date. Reference: OSHA, NIOSH, FRA

