
Just the Facts... **Bloodborne Pathogens – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

General

Select PPE types and characteristics based on:

- The procedure(s) that will be performed,
- The type of exposure anticipated,
- The quantity of blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) anticipated to be encountered, and
- Other safety and health hazards that may pose a risk to personnel.

Body protection

- Wear impervious disposable gowns, aprons, jumpsuits, etc. that will prevent blood or OPIM from penetrating and contaminating the PPE's inner surfaces and subsequently underlying clothing and skin.
- Keep an extra change of work clothing on hand at all times.

Hand protection

- Wear polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or vinyl gloves when handling human remains.
- Wear structural fire-fighting gloves that meet the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.156, *Fire Brigades*, for situations where broken glass and sharp edges may be encountered, such as when extricating bodies from wreckages.
- Select gloves that fit tightly around the wrists to prevent contamination of the hands for situations where large amounts of blood are likely to be encountered.

Eye and face protection

- Wear a surgical mask (unless respiratory protection is required, then substitute with required respirator) and safety glasses or a face shield where there is potential for splashing or spattering of blood or OPIM or for the generation of airborne particles from dried blood.
- Wear a faceshield or splash-resistant goggles over eye glasses.

Foot protection

Wear rubber boots or appropriate shoe covers where there is potential for footwear to become grossly contaminated.

Head protection

Wear head covers when contact with large quantities of blood or OPIM is anticipated.

Respiratory protection

Respiratory protection is not normally required unless the local medical authority deems it essential to protect personnel from biohazardous materials.

Other

Consider the need for other PPE, such as hardhats and safety shoes, when tasks involve recovery of human remains and personal effects from wreckage.

Repair and replacement

Supervisors must –

- Provide all PPE that is expected to be needed. PPE must be
 - Readily accessible,
 - Appropriate for the specific tasks or procedures,
 - Available in the correct sizes, and
 - Durable under normal conditions of use.
- Require all exposed personnel to use and wear appropriate PPE and to repair or replace PPE as needed to maintain its effectiveness.
- Define work area boundaries and require personnel to remove PPE before leaving the work area.
- Provide designated areas or containers for the storage of contaminated PPE.
- Permit only trained personnel to handle contaminated PPE.

Personnel must –

- Remove PPE and underlying clothing immediately or as soon as possible when PPE is penetrated by blood or OPIM.
- Repair or replace damaged PPE as needed to maintain its effectiveness.
- Properly wear PPE.

Personal protective equipment program

Organizations must develop and implement a PPE program that meets the requirements specified in 29 CFR 1910.132. The program must contain provisions for:

- Identifying and evaluating hazards in the workplace that call for the use of PPE,
- Selecting and maintaining PPE, and
- Training personnel in the use, wear, limitations, proper care, maintenance, and disposal of PPE; the methods for decontaminating reusable PPE; how to obtain replacement PPE; and how to remove contaminated PPE to avoid contact with skin and underlying clothing.

Respiratory protection program

When personnel are required to wear respirators, organizations must comply with 29 CFR 1910.134, *Respiratory Protection*. These requirements include the development and implementation of a respiratory protection program that includes -

- Written standing operating procedures for respirator selection and use,
- Respirator selection based on the type and degree of hazard,
- Employee training,
- Regular cleaning and disinfection of respirators,
- Proper storage of respirators,
- Respirator inspection,
- Surveillance of work conditions and the degree of exposure,
- Program evaluation, and
- Employee medical qualifications for respirator use.

For further details, see USACHPPM TG 190 and AR 11-34.