Northwestern
Personal Protective Equipment Program
Risk Management Services
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Personal Protective Equipment Program  
Risk Management  
January 2016
I. Program Goals and Objectives

Northwestern University requires all employees to use appropriate personal protective equipment (including eye, face, foot, hand and head protection) when deemed necessary. Departments shall determine and document required personal protective equipment (PPE) through the completion of a PPE Hazard Assessment.

Personal protective equipment shall be provided to employees at no cost, including replacement equipment resulting from regular use. Departments shall ensure that employees are trained and PPE is worn when hazards are present.

The use of appropriate personal protective equipment applies to faculty, staff, students, visitors and volunteers performing tasks or entering areas that require specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

II. Scope and Application

To protect the health and safety of employees and compliance with federal regulations, appropriate personal protective equipment is required in areas where there may be a risk of injury or exposure to hazardous substances or conditions.

Personal protective equipment must be provided and used when engineering, work practice and administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection to prevent occupational diseases, injury and fatalities.

III. Responsibilities

A. Risk Management

i. Develop and maintain the PPE program.

ii. Develop PPE Hazard Assessment.

iii. Assist departments and supervisors in conducting PPE Hazard Assessments.

iv. Provide technical support and consultation for departments and employees regarding the selection of appropriate PPE.

v. Update this program as needed.

B. Department Supervisors

i. Consult with Risk Management and Safety for the selection of appropriate PPE.

ii. Perform a PPE Hazard Assessment of work areas to identify and control physical and health hazards.

iii. Identify and provide appropriate PPE for employees.

iv. Train employee in the use and care of their PPE.

v. Maintain PPE, including replacing worn and damaged PPE.

vi. Notify Risk Management and Safety when changes have occurred in the process, chemical or equipment used which may change PPE needs.
C. Employees
   i. Comply with this program.
   ii. Properly wear PPE.
   iii. Attend PPE training.
   iv. Care for, clean and maintain PPE, and
   v. Inform your supervisor of the need to repair or replace PPE.

IV. Procedures
   A. General

   PPE will be provided and used in the following circumstances:

   i. Where it has been determined that engineering, and/or administrative controls do not reduce exposure to a safe level.
   ii. Where development or installation of engineering controls are pending.
   iii. Where it has been determined that PPE is necessary to protect the health and safety of employees,
   iv. During short-term, non-routine operations for which engineering controls are not practical.
   v. During emergency situations such as spills, ventilation malfunctions, and other damage control activities.

B. PPE Hazard Assessment Certification

   i. A PPE Hazard Assessment is an evaluation of your workplace that helps determine hazards employees are exposed to and what PPE they need to protect themselves. If a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) has been completed or is planned, and it will cover PPE requirements, the JHA can serve as the PPE Hazard Assessment.

   ii. Supervisors in consultation with Risk Management Services must complete the Hazard Assessment. This assessment must be verified through written certification that identifies:
       a) The workplace/area evaluated
       b) The person certifying that the evaluation has been performed,
       c) The date of the hazard assessment
       d) The documented hazard assessment
C. Selection of PPE
   i. Selection of PPE should be made in consultation with Risk Management & Safety.
   ii. Selection of PPE must provide protection against the hazards for which they are selected. Departments and Supervisors should consider the following when selecting PPE:
       a) Chemical hazards
       b) Physical hazards
       c) Task requirements
       d) Potential for PPE failure
       e) Maintenance requirements
       f) Interferences
       g) PPE durability
       h) Regulatory requirements/certification
       i) User’s size and physical abilities (for fit, comfort and individual needs)

D. Procurement of PPE
   Departments are responsible for purchasing PPE for their employees, visitors, and volunteers.

E. Storage of PPE
   PPE shall be properly stored to protect against environmental conditions that might degrade or reduce the effectiveness of the equipment or result in contamination during storage. PPE having a shelf-life limitation (e.g. respirator cartridges) shall be checked periodically to ensure compliance with the expiration date.

F. Maintenance of PPE
   i. All PPE shall be maintained in a sanitary and serviceable condition. PPE requiring specialized service as required by the manufacturer shall be serviced by qualified personnel.
   ii. Employees issued PPE for their exclusive use shall be visually inspected for defects by the employee before each use.
   iii. PPE subject to use by more than one individual such as visitor PPE (i.e. safety glasses) lab shall be cleaned by a department designate.
   iv. PPE used only occasionally, shall be cleaned and disinfected by the last individual to use it. Where disinfection of PPE is not applicable (i.e. thermal gloves, leather gloves) it is recommended that the user wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after use.
   v. PPE intended for emergency use shall be cleaned, disinfected, and placed in an operable condition after each use by the last individual to use it. Such equipment shall be inspected monthly to ensure it is in proper condition. Records shall be kept of these inspections.
V. Training

Employees who are required to wear PPE must be trained on how to do the following:

i. Use PPE properly,
ii. Be aware of when PPE is necessary,
iii. Know what kind of PPE is necessary,
iv. Understand the limitations of PPE in protecting against injury,
v. Put on, adjust, wear and take of PPE,
vi. Maintain PPE properly.

VI. Regulatory Authority and Related Information


VII. Contact

For questions regarding Personal Protective Equipment, please contact Gwen Butler, Director, Environmental, Health and Safety, at gwen.butler@northwestern.edu or 847.491.4936.