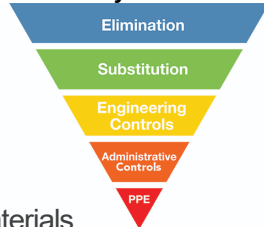


Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In your work here at Northwestern, hazards may exist in many forms, such as sharp edges, falling objects, flying sparks, chemicals, and noise. Using PPE (e.g., glasses, gloves, and hearing protection) to protect yourself is often essential when completing tasks on campus. However, it is important to remember that PPE is the last line of defense when utilizing the **hierarchy of controls**, which is the preferred order of action to reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Hierarchy of Controls



Elimination ensures the hazard no longer exists. Examples include ending the use of hazardous materials and doing work at ground level rather than at heights, such as rooftops.

Substitution means changing materials or processes to reduce the hazard, such as switching to quieter equipment and tools.

Engineering controls reduce exposure by preventing hazards from reaching you. Examples include using guardrails, machine guards, and ventilation systems.

Administrative controls establish work practices that reduce the duration, frequency, or intensity of exposure to hazards. This may include training, job rotation, rest breaks, and limiting access to hazardous areas.

Did you know?

There were 26 finger, hand, and wrist injuries at Northwestern in 2022, which could have been prevented by wearing PPE.

Tips for Success When Talking to Your Team

Preparation is Key: Keep the topic relevant to your work. Work with your team to review potential hazards in your work area and discuss the required PPE for the work tasks.

Stay Positive: Keep the focus on what can be done to create a safe workplace instead of focusing on what has gone wrong in the past.

Share a Story, Ask for a Story: Storytelling is a powerful method to convey information. Stories from your employees make the topic even more relatable.

Wearing is caring!

PPE is the equipment you wear to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. Common types of PPE used on campus include gloves, safety glasses, boots, earplugs, hard hats, respirators, and knee pads. Below are some helpful tips to set yourself up for success when wearing PPE:

- PPE only protects you when it's appropriate for the task at hand and you're wearing it correctly.
- Inspect PPE prior to each use checking for cleanliness, damage, and defects. Immediately replace and dispose of any damaged or defective equipment.
- Review [safety data sheets \(SDS\)](#) to determine appropriate PPE and safety measures when handling chemicals.
- Select the correct PPE for the task, such as a face shield, goggles, and gloves for handling chemicals.
- Know how to adjust and put on your PPE to ensure it fits properly and will be effective.
- Keep PPE clean and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidelines.
- Contact your supervisor if you are unsure what PPE is required when assigned a task.



Learn more: Complete online PPE [training](#) and review Northwestern's PPE [program](#).

Report all injuries: [Online](#) or call (847) 491-5582.

Safety at Home

Many at-home tasks (e.g., yard work, cooking, and using cleaning chemicals) may require PPE for hand, face, foot, ear, and eye protection. Below are some tips to keep you and your family safe:

- ✓ Always read the manufacturer guidelines to determine appropriate PPE, such as goggles for handling chemicals.
- ✓ Use oven mitts to protect your hands while handling hot items in the kitchen or outdoor grilling areas.
- ✓ Wear gloves, safety glasses, protective footwear, and hearing protection when operating equipment such as lawnmowers and leaf blowers.

For Additional Information Contact Environmental Health and Safety at ehs@northwestern.edu.

Do you or your team have a safety story you'd like to share? Contact Environmental Health and Safety for details.