



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

7.8 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect our employees by ensuring that, whenever necessary, due to hazards from processes or the work environment, personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided and maintained in a safe and reliable manner.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of directors, managers, supervisors, and workers, including the assessment of hazards, the selection and use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and training requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the City of Providence, excluding the Providence Police Department, Providence Fire Department, and the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB).

Due to the unique nature of its operations and regulatory governance, employees of these entities will continue to follow the policies and procedures for personal protective equipment (PPE) outlined within their agencies.

Policy

1. Responsibilities

- A. Department directors and deputy directors, in conjunction with the Director of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) within the Department of People & Culture (DPC), are responsible for:
 1. Assessing the hazards and exposures within their operations that may require the use of PPE.
 2. Determining the type of equipment needed.
 3. Purchasing the equipment.
- B. Managers, supervisors, and employees will provide input to help select the most suitable equipment.
- C. Managers and supervisors will be responsible for training employees in the proper use and care of PPE, ensuring that all employees are assigned the appropriate PPE, and ensuring that PPE is worn by employees when and where required.
- D. Employees are responsible for adhering to all provisions of this program and its related procedures. They must wear PPE when and where it is required.

2. Hazard Assessment

- A. Each department will conduct an assessment of its workplace annually to determine if hazards are present or likely to be present that necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
 1. This assessment will consist of a workplace survey to identify potential hazards to workers.
 2. Consideration will be given to hazards such as impact, penetration, laceration, compression (e.g., dropping heavy objects on feet or rolling over), chemical exposure, harmful dust, heat, light (optical) radiation, electrical hazards, noise, and other relevant factors.
 3. Additional consideration will be given to the workplace layout and placement of coworkers to determine how different activities may impact each employee's work environment.
- B. Where such hazards are present, or likely to be present, each department will:
 1. Select and have each affected employee use the types of PPE that will protect the employee from the hazards identified in the hazard assessment.
 2. Communicate equipment selection decisions to each affected employee.



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3. Select PPE that properly fits each affected employee.
4. Train employees in the use and care of PPE as described elsewhere in this policy.
- C. The department will verify that the required workplace hazard assessment has been performed by completing the "Hazard Assessment" form, which is dated and signed by the staff performing the evaluation.
- D. Whenever the department changes a process in the workplace that may introduce or alter an exposure or hazard, the department will conduct an assessment to determine if additional PPE is required or if a change in the current PPE is necessary. These supplemental hazard assessments will also be documented, signed, and dated by the person performing the evaluation.
- E. Each department's workplace hazard assessment will be reviewed and updated annually.

3. **Training**

- A. Each employee who is required to use personal protective equipment (PPE) will be trained in the following:
 1. Why PPE is necessary.
 2. When PPE is essential.
 3. What PPE is critical, and what alternative equipment choices are available.
 4. How to properly don, doff, adjust, and wear PPE.
 5. The proper care, maintenance, storage, handling, life, and disposal of PPE.
- B. Required PPE training will:
 1. Include opportunities for employees to handle PPE and demonstrate that they understand their training and can use their PPE properly.
 2. Be provided by the managers or supervisors of affected employees.
 3. Be documented in writing to include the names of each trained employee, the dates of the training, and the subject matter covered.
- C. If an employee who has been previously trained demonstrates a lack of knowledge or behavior that leads their manager or supervisor to believe they do not have a proper understanding of the PPE involved, that employee will be retrained.
- D. If there are changes in the workplace or processes that change the exposure(s) or type of PPE to be used, all affected employees will be retrained.

4. **Care of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- A. Whenever practical, personal protective equipment (PPE) will be assigned to individual workers for their exclusive use. Employees will be responsible for the PPE assigned to them or used by them.
- B. PPE will be regularly cleaned, inspected, and stored according to the instructions provided during training sessions or as directed by department managers or supervisors.
 4. Defective or damaged PPE shall not be used.
 5. Employees are required to report any faulty or damaged PPE to their management so that it may be repaired or replaced.

5. **Visitors, Vendors, and Contractors**

- A. Visitors (including vendors and contractors) must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when entering areas where it is required for employees.



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- B. The host department is responsible for maintaining a minimum stock of suitable PPE for use when visitors are expected.
- C. When devices such as safety glasses/goggles, dust masks and the like, which have direct skin contact, are loaned to visitors, they should be either disposable (e.g., dust masks, earplugs) or cleaned and sanitized (e.g., safety glasses/goggles, earmuffs) before being loaned to another person.
- D. The host department must ensure that the visitor is familiar with the proper use of PPE.

6. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Categories**

The following categories provide a general summary of hazards encountered in the workplace and the corresponding personal protective equipment (PPE) required when the hazard cannot be eliminated.

Hazards unique to a particular department not identified below are subject to the provisions of this policy. In such cases, a department director will have overall responsibility for ensuring that a department-specific addendum to this policy reflects the identification, evaluation, selection, and training process for the appropriate PPE.

A. **Eye and Face Protection Equipment**

- 1. Prevention of eye injuries requires that all people who may be in contact with eye hazard areas wear protective eyewear.
- 2. Employees shall wear eye or face protection when they are exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, biologic hazards, acids or caustic liquids, chemical gases or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation.
- 3. Some examples of appropriate eye or face protection include:
 - 1. Safety glasses with side shields for moderate impact and particles encountered in grinding and scaling.
 - 2. Single-lens goggles with clear or tinted lenses, featuring perforated, port-vented, or non-vented frames, offer protection similar to safety glasses and can be worn over prescription eyeglasses.
 - 3. Welder goggles with impact-resistant lenses that protect from sparking, scaling, or splashing metals and harmful rays.
 - 4. Chipper or grinder goggles that protect from flying particles.
 - 5. Face shields that protect eyes and face against flying particles, metal sparks, and chemical or biological splashes.
 - 6. Welding shields that protect worker's eyes and face from infrared or radiant light burns, flying sparks, metal spatter or slag chips encountered during welding, brazing, soldering, resistance welding, bare or shielded electric arc welding, and oxyacetylene welding and cutting operations.

B. **Emergency Eyewash Facilities**

- 1. Where the eyes of any employee may be exposed to corrosive materials, emergency eyewash facilities will be located in a readily accessible location in the event of an emergency.
- 2. In other areas where there is a risk of exposure to splashes or foreign bodies, emergency eyewash facilities will be available within ten (10) seconds of walking time from the location of a hazard.
- 3. Fifty-five (55) feet should be used as a guideline for determining ten (10) seconds of walking time.
- 4. Emergency eyewash equipment must be installed at the same level as the hazard, without requiring the use of stairs or ramps. The path of travel from the hazard to the equipment should be free of obstructions and as straight as possible.

C. **Respirators**



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1. Nuisance dust masks can be worn for comfort against non-toxic nuisance dusts during activities such as mowing, gardening, sweeping, and dusting. These masks are not respirators and do not offer protection against hazardous dusts, gases, or vapors.
2. Respirators will be used when there is exposure to harmful dusts, mists, fumes, and other hazardous substances, as deemed necessary by the Director of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) within the Department of People & Culture (DPC), in conjunction with the department.
3. These will not be substituted for engineering or environmental control methods without prior approval.
4. Use of respirators will be subject to the Respiratory Protection Policy.

D. Hearing Protection

1. Where it is not feasible to reduce the noise levels or duration of exposures to those considered as permissible noise exposures, ear protective devices should be provided and used.
2. Some examples of hearing protective devices include:
 1. Insert-type earplugs – A device designed to provide an airtight seal within the ear canal. There are three types of insert earplugs.
 2. Pre-Molded Earplugs – Pre-molded earplugs are pliable devices of fixed proportions that come in various sizes and will fit most people. While pre-molded earplugs are reusable, they may deteriorate and should be replaced periodically.
 3. Formable Earplugs – Formable earplugs are available in a single size. Some are made of material that, after being compressed and inserted, expands to form a seal in the ear canal. Each earplug must be held in place while it expands enough to remain firmly sealed. A set of earplugs with a cord attached is available.
 4. Custom Molded Earplugs – A small percentage of the population cannot be fitted with standard pre-molded or formable earplugs. Custom earplugs can be made to fit the exact size and shape of the individual's ear canal. Individuals needing custom earplugs will be referred to an audiologist.
 5. Earmuffs – Earmuffs are devices worn around the ears to reduce the level of noise that reaches them. Their effectiveness depends on an airtight seal between the cushion and the head.

Note: *Earbuds, earphones, or headphones are NOT to be used as hearing protection.*

E. Head Protection

1. Employees shall wear head protection when working in areas where there is a potential danger of head injury from impact, falling or flying objects, or electrical shock and burns.
2. Bump caps or skull guards will not be worn as substitutes for safety caps or hats because they do not protect from high-impact forces or penetration by falling objects.
3. Hard hats will be worn by employees working under the following conditions:
 1. Approaching or inspecting any construction site.
 2. Engaging in construction, remodeling, or demolition.
 3. Working as a flagger.
 4. Working near high-voltage electrical hazards or other risks of electrical shock is present.
 5. Working in the immediate area of overhead swinging loads.
 6. Operating on the city roads and sidewalks, performing repairs to sinkholes or potholes, replacing or repairing sidewalks, or repaving roads.
 7. Inspecting or working in and around open holes.
 8. Operating lifting or earth-moving equipment or working in the vicinity of heavy equipment where overhead loads could be encountered.



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1. Specific equipment includes front-loaders, backhoes, forklifts, and overhead crane trucks.
 9. Working at heights, either on a ladder, lift truck, or elevated platform.
 10. Working in an area where there may be contact with fixed objects such as exposed beams, pipes, etc.
 11. Working in areas with hazards from falling objects.
 12. Certain forestry operations (as instructed by Parks or DPW).
 13. Operating in damaged areas caused by explosions, flooding, fires, or any other situation where there is a question of the structural integrity of the surroundings.
 14. When deemed necessary by the appropriate manager, supervisor, or lead.
4. Safe handling practices for hard hats include:
 1. Regular inspection for defects.
 2. Keep clean so defects are more easily noticeable.
 3. Do not use paint, solvents, chemicals, or adhesives on the shell, as they can cause the shell to deteriorate.
 4. When not in use, store the hard hat in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Exposure to extreme heat and sun can weaken the shell.
 5. Types of head protection equipment include:
 1. Type I – Intended to reduce force of impact from blows to the top of the head.
 2. Type II – Intended to reduce force of impact from blow to top or sides of the head.
 3. Class C – Conductive, not intended to protect against contact with electrical hazards.
 4. Class G – General reduces the danger of head contact with low-voltage conductors. Proof-tested at 2,200 volts.
 5. Class E – Electrical minimizes the threat of head contact with higher voltage conductors. Proof-tested at 20,000 volts.
 6. Head protection shall comply with the Rhode Island Occupational Safety and Health Act (R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-20-1 et seq.), applicable standards enforced by the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training, including 29 CFR § 1910.135 and 29 CFR § 1926.100, and shall meet these standards.
- F. Hand(s)**
1. Employees shall wear appropriate hand protection when their hands are exposed to hazards such as those from chemical absorption, severe cuts or lacerations, severe abrasions, chemical burns, thermal burns, and extreme temperatures.
 2. The selection of hand protection will be based on the tasks performed, the conditions present, the duration of use, and other potential hazards that may exist. Glove selection shall be based on the performance characteristics of the gloves, the conditions, the duration of use, and the hazards present. One type of glove will not be suitable for all situations.
 3. Note: When employees are exposed to chemical hazards, the appropriate Safety Data Sheet (SDS) will be used as the primary means to determine the correct type of hand protection. Read instructions and warnings on chemical container labels and SDS before working with any chemical. Recommended glove types are often listed in the section for PPE.
 4. Types of hand protection equipment include:
 1. Disposable Nitrile Gloves – May help guard against mild irritants, greases, custodial cleaning products, blood and bodily fluids, and unsanitary conditions.
 2. Fabric Gloves – Made of cotton or blends, may improve grip and help insulate against mild cold and heat.



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3. Leather Gloves – Guard against injuries from sparks or scraping against rough surfaces. They are also used with an insulated liner to guard against electrical hazards.
4. Metal Mesh Gloves – Protect from cuts and scratches when working with cutting tools or sharp instruments.
5. Chemical Resistant Gloves – Made of rubber, neoprene, polyvinyl alcohol, or vinyl, protect hands from corrosives, oils, and solvents.
6. Cut-Resistant Gloves – Protect hands when working with sharp tools and sharp edges, such as glass, metal, ceramics, and other materials.
7. Puncture-Resistant Gloves – Prevent puncture injuries from sharp objects such as thorns, vegetation, metal scraps, needles, and waste.
8. Waterproof Gloves – Serve as a protective barrier from contaminated water.
9. When the risk of injury includes the arm, protective sleeves (often attached to the gloves) may be appropriate.

G. Foot and Leg

1. Employees shall wear protective footwear when working in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects, objects piercing the sole, or where the employee's feet are exposed to electrical hazards.
2. Safety footwear is designed to protect feet against a wide variety of injuries. Impact, compression, and puncture are the most common types of foot injury. Consideration should also be made for injuries caused by possible exposure to:
 1. Corrosive or irritating substances.
 2. Extreme hot or cold temperatures.
 3. Water or other liquids that may penetrate the footwear causing damage to the foot and footwear.
 4. Rotating or abrasive machinery, e.g., chainsaws or grinders.
 5. An electrical hazard, such as a static-discharge or electric-shock hazard, that remains after the employer takes other necessary protective measures.
3. When the risk of injury includes the leg and/or top of the foot, the following equipment should be considered:
 1. Leggings that protect the lower legs and feet from heat hazards, like molten metal or welding sparks. Safety snaps allow leggings to be removed quickly.
 2. Metatarsal guards that can be strapped to the outside of shoes to protect the instep area from impact and compression, and are made of aluminum, steel, fiber, or plastic.
 3. Toe guards that fit over the toes of regular shoes to protect only the toes from impact and compression, and are made of steel, aluminum, or plastic.
 1. Combination foot and shin guards can be used in conjunction with toe guards when additional protection is required.
4. Employees with the possibility of exposure to contaminated water should wear rubber boots or waders. Rubber boots or waders should be removed before leaving the worksite and before entering a vehicle or building.

H. Body Protection

1. Employees should utilize body protection to mitigate workplace hazards that could injure their bodies. Such risks include intense heat, splashes of molten metal and other hot liquids, impacts from tools,



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machinery, and materials, cuts, hazardous chemicals, radiation, or contact with potentially infectious materials or bodily fluids, like blood.

2. Body protection equipment includes items such as vests, jackets, aprons, coveralls, surgical gowns, or full-body suits. This equipment can be made from several types of materials:
 1. Paper-like Fiber – Disposable suits made of this material protect against dust and splashes.
 2. Treated Wool and Cotton – Adapts well to changing workplace temperatures. Comfortable and fire resistant. Protects against dust, abrasions, and rough or irritating surfaces.
 3. Duck – Protects against cuts and bruises while handling heavy, sharp, or rough materials.
 4. Leather – Often used to protect against dry heat and flame.
 5. Rubber, Rubberized Fabric, Neoprene, or Plastics – Protects against specific acids and other chemicals.
3. High-visibility clothing enhances the visibility of employees working in hazardous conditions, both on and off the roadway.
 1. Safety Vests – Retroreflective vests will be worn by all employees where exposure to vehicular traffic exists and whenever directed to do so to ensure visibility.
 2. High-Visibility T-Shirts – May be substituted for vests with departmental approval, provided that they meet appropriate retroreflective criteria.

I. **Vehicle Safety Equipment**

Motor vehicle accidents are a common cause of injury. While not technically categorized as personal protective equipment (PPE), the following procedures assist in reducing the risk of injury. Please refer to the Vehicle Use Policy for additional information.

J. **Seat Belts and Shoulder Harnesses**

Drivers and passengers in city vehicles, as well as employees who drive their vehicles for city business, must always wear seat belts and shoulder harnesses in compliance with Rhode Island State Law.

K. **On Board Equipment**

1. City owned trucks (non-CDL) and vans will always have a first aid kit on board.
2. CDL vehicles will always have the following equipment on board:
 1. First aid kit, to include burn cream and eyewash
 2. Fire extinguisher
 3. Three (3) reflective triangles
 4. Wheel chocks, for vehicles that do not have air brakes.

7. **Reissuing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- E. Employees are required to report to work with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) that is in good working condition. Employees who do not have the proper PPE must obtain replacement equipment before beginning work.
- F. The following procedure will be used when reissuing any PPE to an employee:
 1. Damaged or broken equipment that requires replacement will be turned in to a supervisor.
 2. Lost or stolen equipment will be replaced one time to any employee who requests it.
 3. Equipment may be reissued with a reasonable explanation.
- G. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain and be accountable for said equipment.
- H. Using the applicable "Issuance of PPE" form, the supervisor or department designee will document the issuing of the equipment, and the employee will sign for it.



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8. **Compliance**

- A. Every employee has the duty and responsibility to be aware of and comply with the City of Providence's safety policies and work practices.
- B. Employees who fail to comply with the Personal Protective Equipment Policy may be sent home to ensure a safe work environment.
- C. Employees found in violation of this policy can be subject to progressive corrective and disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- D. Department directors, deputy directors, and managers must review incidents of non-compliance or workplace incidents, continually reassess work site procedures, and make necessary changes to ensure compliance with this policy and improve safety practices.

Related Policies:

Accident, Injury, and Illness Reporting Policy

Reasonable Accommodation Program - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Workplace Cleanliness Policy

Other Related Information:

[Local 1033 Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)

Policy History:

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