

Whatever the job...use the right personal protective equipment!

April is Injury Prevention Month. The home environment can and should be a safe place for both you and your family, but did you know that more people are injured and killed at home than on the job? Monitor home activities carefully and don't be afraid to suggest and use personal protective equipment when necessary. It's up to you to protect you and your family members because no one else will!

Listed below are some examples of hazards and the associated PPE that can be used to reduce those hazards.

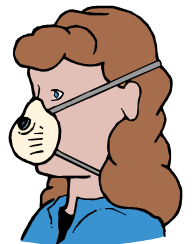
Hand Protection—there are various tasks at home that can injure one's hands. The use of gloves to reduce abrasion injuries is the most common. Raking, digging and even some electrical hazards can be controlled with the appropriate gloves. Cotton jersey gloves or leather gloves are often used for these work operations. Remember that some solvents, paints and fuels can cause poisoning through the skin; just as you would a work, wear appropriate gloves for proper protection.



Eye Protection—our eyes are arguably our most precious gift. Examples of tasks that often lead to eye injuries include: lawn mowing, weed eating, welding, grinding, cutting, filing, sawing, chipping, hammering, chiseling and even sun exposure, to name just a few. The use of safety glasses, goggles, special lens or a face shield can help minimize these risks. Purchase this equipment from reputable sources; don't take chances on poor quality equipment.

Hearing Protection—noise levels above 85 decibels can permanently damage hearing. There are numerous work operations that can produce noise levels dramatically above that threshold, including: weed eating, grinders, routers, saws, hammers and other impact devices such as jack hammers, to name just a few. A good rule of thumb is: if you have to raise your voice to another person who is two feet away, you probably need hearing protection. The use of high quality ear plugs or ear muffs will likely minimize noise threats.

Respiratory Protection—breathing toxic gases, fumes and particulate matter are all hazards that must be protected against even in a home environment. Persons with allergies and other respiratory ailments can also be hypersensitive to respiratory risks. Activities like mowing, weed eating, grinding, welding, and working around chemicals can cause respiratory injuries. Consult an MSDS or manufacturer instructions for the appropriate respirator as not all respirators are designed the same. Remember home use is different from use at work, where you will need to follow the OSHA requirements for voluntary use of respiratory protection as outlined in your institute's respiratory protection program.



Skin Protection—skin tissue can be injured in a variety of ways, including: sawing, cutting, grinding, welding, gas cutting operations and even sun exposure. Always wear clothing that protects against these hazards. Sun exposure can be minimized by the use of sun block lotion over 30 SPF, long sleeved shirts, long pants and hats with floppy brim.



Foot Protection—foot injuries can occur for a variety of reasons. Digging, shoveling, mowing, and moving and dropping objects can severely damage feet. The use of boots or steel-toed shoes instead of tennis shoes, sandals or flip flops can help prevent foot injuries. These photos are of a steel-toed boot after being run over by a lawnmower. The wearer suffered some bruised toes, but they were still attached to his feet. Read the full story at <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/articles/n-z/steeltoe.htm>

Remember to have at least one well-stocked first aid kit and fire extinguisher at home. Most home safety experts agree that each home should have at least one, 10 lb. A:B:C rated fire extinguisher and make sure all members of your family know how to use it. Also, read and discuss safety warnings and recommendations on powered equipment and consult MSDSs on chemical hazards and first aid measures. Ask for MSDSs for household products sold at home improvement stores. You can also find household product safety information on-line from the Household Products Database, <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/>.

