



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY  
EXPERIMENT STATION

# MAFES DAWG TRACKS

The letters PPE are often used around the workplace. **Do you know what PPE is?**

**Personal Protective Equipment** is an item a person can wear (such as specific gloves, glasses, shoes, ear protection, hard hats, respirators, coveralls, vests, etc.) to help protect the body from a hazard. However, work practice and engineering controls should be the first line of defense to eliminate or reduce hazards where possible.

## **Which PPE is required for a job?**

Conduct a hazard assessment to determine what hazards are present during each job task. This will also help in determining the specifications needed for each piece of PPE.

## **Where do I get PPE from?**

PPE should be purchased & supplied by your department. An employee should be given the PPE needed when a job task is assigned. Keep extra PPE available in an easily accessible & known location to all, so replacement will be quick if an item is damaged or no longer useable. Most people will use PPE if it's right there, but not when they have to go dig & look for it before a task; make it easy to use.

## **How to inspect PPE for damage & know when it needs replacement?**

Inspect PPE before each use looking for tears, missing components & such; do not use if there is damage. Some items can "look" okay but may need replacing periodically even with no obvious damage. This is especially true for items like hardhats and respirators. Always read the manufacturers labels for specifics on each item.

## **How should PPE be stored & cleaned?**

One word – sanitary! Everything needs a place, including PPE. An acceptable place is not thrown in the back of the truck left to the weather elements, laying covered on a cluttered work bench or dropped on the floor. PPE should be hung on a hook, kept in a protective bag, storage bin or cabinet.

Clean items according to their specific recommendations & understand the negative effects of some cleaning methods. For example, a pressure washer maybe okay for rubber boots, but definitely not for chainsaw chaps (it damages the fibers).

## **How should PPE be worn, adjusted, and used for proper fitment and protection?**

Just like your daily clothing choices, PPE comes in a variety of styles and sizes too. If possible, let the employee pick out what they prefer and they will be happier to wear it. The proper fit & adjustment of PPE can mean the difference in effective protection or possibly creating a greater hazard; this is especially true in fall protection harnesses and respirators.

Be aware that the psychological effect of PPE may be such that the individual wearing the PPE feels more protected than he or she actually is ... **all PPE has limitations.** That is why a thorough hazard assessment, proper PPE selection, its use and maintenance is vitally important for each job task and the personal protective equipment needs.

*Feel free to call or email if your department needs help with a hazard assessment or PPE recommendations.*

For more info contact:

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## **Sources:**

<https://www.osha.gov/personal-protective-equipment>