

RISK SIMPLIFIED

RESOURCES

[Title 8 CCR, Section 3380
Personal Protective Devices](#)

[Title 8 CCR, Section 3380
Appendix A](#)

[National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health - Hierarchy of
Controls](#)

QUESTIONS:

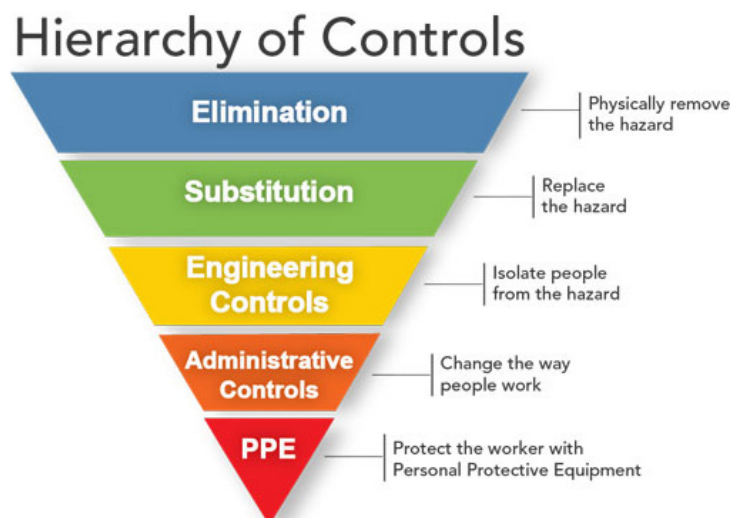
[Email PRISM Risk Control](#)
or call 916.850.7300

Is PPE Right for the Hazard?

by Scarlett Sadler

An agency's employees are one of its most valuable assets, so providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to every employee to prevent injuries seems obvious. But is it that simple?

According to the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#), PPE is the least effective method of protecting employees and the last line of defense as it does not reduce or eliminate hazards. This places PPE at the bottom of the so-called hierarchy of controls. Therefore, PPE should only be considered when all other options for reducing or eliminating the hazard have been exhausted. In addition, [Title 8 CCR, Section 3380 Personal Protective Devices](#), requires employers to assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present or likely to be present, which necessitates PPE.



Assessing the Need for PPE

In order to assess the need for PPE, an agency should conduct a thorough walkthrough survey of the worksite or area to identify potential hazards. This survey should include work processes, tasks, materials, and equipment.

Once a thorough walkthrough has been conducted, an agency should review each hazard and make a determination of the potential for injury associated with each of the hazards identified. During this review process, all potential methods of controlling the hazard should be considered before automatically determining the need for PPE.

Selecting Appropriate PPE

After this review process, if it is determined that no alternative control measures can be put into place, the agency will need to determine what PPE will be right for the worksite and the employee conducting the tasks. Cal/OSHA recommends the following process for selecting the right PPE:

- Become familiar with the potential hazards and the type of protective equipment that is available, and what it can do; i.e., splash protection, impact protection, etc.;
- Compare the hazards associated with the environment; i.e., impact velocities, masses, projectile shape, radiation intensities, with the capabilities of the available protective equipment;
- Select the protective equipment which ensures a level of protection greater than the minimum required to protect employees from the hazards; and
- Fit the user with the protective device and give instructions on the care and use of the PPE. It is very important that end users be made aware of all warning labels for and limitations of their PPE.



On an ongoing basis, agencies should periodically reassess the worksite or area to ensure that the previously selected PPE is still suitable for the job, as well as identify and evaluate any new equipment and processes. It is also important to review injury/accident data to potentially identify new hazards and evaluate the effectiveness of control measures. For additional assistance or questions regarding PPE, please contact [PRISM's Risk Control Department](#).