

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT: DOING IT RIGHT

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as hard hats and respirators, can offer effective protection against workplace hazards when used properly. But it is considered as the last line of defence. Workplaces are responsible for conducting risk assessments, and employers and employees must work together to identify the best ways to keep workers safe in any given circumstance. While this process helps protect workers from hazards, it also serves as a way to include employees who, based on prohibited grounds of discrimination, such as religion and disability, may not be able to wear PPE. Following the workplace safety preventive measures in order (also known as the hierarchy of controls) will help you identify the most effective safety measures for your workplace.



EMPLOYERS

RESPONSIBILITY

Workplace safety preventive measures help you fulfill your responsibility to eliminate, substitute or reduce the risk of exposure to workplace hazards.

APPLY EFFECTIVE MEASURES

You are required to follow the preventive measures in order and use a risk-based approach to apply those that offer the best protection in any given circumstance.

BENEFITS

Using the appropriate preventive measures can benefit:

- **your business**, by creating the safest working environment; and
- **your employees**, some of whom may not be able to wear and use PPE for reasons linked to prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Employee safety may involve a combination of preventive measures.



PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN ORDER (or the hierarchy of controls)

LEVEL I

Eliminate the hazard



LEVEL II

Substitute the hazard with something safer

Isolate the hazard from people

Reduce risks through engineering controls



LEVEL III

Reduce exposure to the hazard using administrative actions (e.g. reassignment)

Use PPE

EMPLOYEES



RIGHTS AND DUTIES

You have certain [duties](#) and the following [rights](#):

1. **Right to know** of any identified or foreseeable hazards
2. **Right to participate** in identifying and correcting hazards
3. **Right to refuse** dangerous work

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Discuss any concerns with your supervisor and follow the [internal complaint resolution process](#).

HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

1. Speak to your employer.
2. Request an accommodation if needed.
3. Consult the [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#) for information on human rights.



DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

When PPE is the only way to address the hazard, employers will need to consider their obligations under the [Duty to Accommodate](#) set out in the [Canadian Human Rights Act](#).

The employer and employee must work together to determine and implement any accommodation measures.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

When employers can't eliminate or mitigate hazards using more effective measures, PPE becomes the last resort available to protect employees.

Examples of PPE: hard hat, respiratory protection, protective eyewear and hearing protection.



The [Canadian Human Rights Act](#) protects individuals from discrimination on prohibited grounds, such as religion and disability. If a worker believes that a work practice or policy prevents them from fully participating, they can speak to their employer and request an accommodation. Employers have a [duty to accommodate](#) on protected grounds up to the point of undue hardship. The [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#) encourages employers to develop an [accommodation policy](#) in their workplace.

For more information, visit canada.ca/workplace-health-safety or contact the **Labour Program at 1-800-641-4049**