



OSHA requires employers to provide PPE when necessary to protect employees from job-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.

- Some OSHA standards specifically require the employer to pay for PPE, especially where the item would be used only on the job.
- When employers purchase PPE, they often retain ownership and have the right to control the use of the PPE.
- They can set rules about whether the PPE can be used only on the jobsite.
- They may require the employee to return the PPE if they terminate employment.

Employers must pay to replace PPE on a regular basis.

- The only exception is when the employee has lost or intentionally damaged the PPE.

Employers are *not* required to pay for a few common items:

- Nonspecialty safety-toe protective footwear (including steel-toes shoes or steel-toe boots) that the employer allows to be worn off the job.
- Nonspecialty prescription safety eyewear that can be used off the job.

Employers are not required to pay for everyday clothing or items designed to protect the employee from weather—they are not considered PPE

- Examples of everyday clothing include items such as long-sleeve shirts, long pants, street shoes, and normal work boots.
- Weather-related items mentioned by OSHA include winter coats, jackets, gloves, parkas, rubber boots, hats, raincoats, ordinary sunglasses, and sunscreen.

In addition, where an employee owns adequate PPE and is allowed to use it, the employer is not required to reimburse the employee for that equipment

- OSHA makes it clear, however, that employers cannot avoid their obligations by requiring employee ownership of PPE as a condition of employment.

OSHA encourages employers to offer a selection of PPE to their employees as a “best practice” to improve their health and safety programs.

- In some cases, employers may offer several choices of basic PPE, but workers may prefer a particular type because of special features or style.
- In such instances, some employers may give a set allowance toward the purchase of required PPE.
- If the employee selects a more expensive choice, he or she is responsible for the extra cost.

The most important rule about required PPE—always use it!