Eye protection toolbox talk

Protective equipment · about 5 minutes · read it out, or say it in your own words

SITE OR JOB	DATE	PRESENTER

Grinders, disc cutters, chisels, nail guns, wire brushes, welding, cement and chemicals all threaten eyes on a building site, and many eye injuries come from a single chip or splash that takes less than a second. Eyes do not heal like skin, and a small injury can cost someone their sight and their trade. The General Safety Regulations require the employer to provide suitable goggles, spectacles, face shields and welding shields free of charge.

SAY THIS

You only get two

A tiny chip of steel or concrete, a splash of acid or a speck of cement can damage your eye for life. It happens in a split second, often while you are just watching someone else work. You cannot buy new eyes. Safety glasses cost little and take two seconds to put on.

Match the protection to the job

Safety glasses with side protection are the minimum for drilling, chiselling, hammering, nailing and general site work. Grinding and cutting with a disc throw sparks and fragments hard and fast, so wear goggles or glasses with a full face shield over them. For pouring acids, chemicals or mixing cement, wear sealed goggles, because liquid gets round ordinary glasses. For welding and cutting with gas, use a proper welding helmet or goggles with the right dark lens. Never use sunglasses or a normal face shield for welding.

Welding flash

Looking at a welding arc, even from a few metres away and only for a moment, can burn the front of your eye. It often only starts hurting hours later, at night, with a gritty, painful, watery feeling. Do not look at the arc. If welding is happening, keep away or stand behind the screen. Where it can be done, the welding area must be screened off to protect the people around it.

Look after your glasses

Scratched, dirty or misted glasses make people take them off, and then they protect nothing. Clean them with water and a soft cloth, not your dusty shirt. Keep them in a case or pouch, not loose in a toolbox. If they are scratched or broken, ask for new ones; you should not pay for them. If you wear prescription glasses, ask what will fit over them or whether safety prescription glasses can be arranged.

If something gets in an eye

Do not rub it, and do not let anyone dig at it with a matchstick, a knife point or a magnet. For dust or a splash, rinse the eye straight away with plenty of clean running water or the eyewash, then go to the first aider. For a chemical splash, keep rinsing for at least 20 minutes and get medical help. If something is stuck in the eye, do not try to remove it: cover the eye and get medical help. A welding flash also needs medical help.

CHECK ON SITE TODAY

- [ ] Which jobs today involve grinding, cutting, chiselling, nailing, welding, chemicals or cement?
- [ ] Does everyone doing those jobs, and everyone working near them, have the right eye protection?
- [ ] Are there face shields for the grinders and cut-off saws, and are they clean and undamaged?
- [ ] Are welding screens up where welding is happening near other people?
- [ ] Is there an eyewash or a supply of clean water near the cutting, mixing and chemical areas?
- [ ] Are any glasses scratched, broken or missing? Replace them now.

ASK THE CREW

- ? Have you ever had something in your eye at work? What were you doing?
- ? Why do people take their safety glasses off, and what would help them keep them on?
- ? Which job on this site do you think is the most dangerous for eyes?
- ? What would you do if a labourer got a splash of brick acid in the eye?

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THIS JOB

Safety glasses with side protection for general site work · Goggles for grinding, dust, cement and chemical splashes · Full face shield over glasses or goggles for grinding and disc cutting · Welding helmet or gas-welding goggles with the correct filter lens · Welding screens to protect people nearby

THE LAW

General Safety Regulations, 1986, regulation 2: Personal safety equipment and facilities; General Safety Regulations, 1986, regulation 9: Welding, flame cutting, soldering and similar operations; Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, section 23: Certain deductions prohibited; General Safety Regulations, 1986, regulation 3(8): First aid, emergency equipment and procedures. What each one says, in plain words, with links: sitediary.co.za/toolbox-talks/eye-protection/

Toolbox talk attendance register

TOPIC

Eye and face protection

DATE

SITE OR JOB

TIME

PRESENTER

COMPANY

PRESENTER SIGNATURE

By signing, I confirm that I attended this toolbox talk, that it was given in a language I understand, and that I could ask questions.

NO.	NAME AND SURNAME	COMPANY OR TRADE	SIGNATURE
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Keep this register in the site health and safety file. Log the talk in today's site diary with a photo of this page.