



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

By Bill Balmat

The U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) requires the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce employee exposure to hazards in the work place when engineering and administrative controls are not feasible or effective in reducing these exposures to acceptable levels. And employers are required to determine if PPE should be used to protect their workers.

Confused and bewildered yet? Don't be. While OSHA does seem to require much of you, they also provide you with all of the resources that you will need when determining the need for PPE for you employees. By going to the following website:

www.osha.gov/SLTC/personalprotectiveequipment/

you will find detailed resource information and guidance addressing the following areas:

- What OSHA standards apply?
 - Standards / Regulatory Agenda / Preamble to Final Rules / More
- What PPE is appropriate for my workplace hazards?
- In what ways may PPE be evaluated and improved?
- What additional information is available?

When PPE is utilized in the workplace, then a PPE program needs to be documented implemented and disseminated to your employees. Components of a PPE program should include –

- Identification of hazards in the workplace
- The selection, maintenance and use of specific PPE
- The training of employees how and when to use PPE
- Monitoring of the program to ensure its ongoing effectiveness

In a national study, 66 percent of respondents considered PPE use an issue at their workplaces. Fifty-seven percent of those surveyed attributed non-compliance of the use of PPE to poor fit or discomfort.

Remember – PPE is effective only if workers wear it!



Bill Balmat is Director, Risk Management Services for Hylant Administrative Services. He specializes in providing operational risk management support, advice, and counsel to public municipalities, public schools and colleges and universities.

Contact: Bill.Balmat@hylant.com