Carpentry Work – Selecting the Right PPE Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. **Eye Injuries:** Wood chips, splinters, and dust can strike unprotected eyes, causing lacerations or blindness.
2. **Respiratory Hazards:** Airborne wood dust and chemical vapors from solvents and finishes may cause lung damage without respirators.
3. **Hearing Damage:** Prolonged exposure to high noise levels from power tools can lead to hearing loss without ear protection.
4. **Head Injuries:** Falling objects or overhead hazards require hard hats; lack of them risks traumatic head injury.
5. **Hand and Finger Injuries:** Operating saws, routers, and nail guns without gloves can result in lacerations, amputations, or crush injuries.
6. **Skin Contact Hazards:** Contact with wet cement, adhesives, or chemical finishes may cause dermatitis or chemical burns without protective gloves and clothing.
7. **Slips, Trips & Falls:** Uneven work surfaces, clutter, or poor housekeeping increase the risk of falls—proper footwear and vigilance are essential.

STATS

- In 2024, OSHA reported 5,190 workplace fatalities, with construction accounting for 21% (1,090 cases). Falls (423 cases) and struck-by incidents (316 cases) were leading causes among carpenters, emphasizing the need for hard hats and safety glasses.
- BLS 2023 data recorded 174,100 non-fatal injuries in construction, with carpenters facing high risks of cuts (30% of cases), eye injuries (15%), and hand injuries (25%) from tasks like cutting or handling lumber. Inadequate PPE contributed to 20% of these incidents.

- WorkSafeBC reported 25–30 annual construction fatalities in British Columbia (2020–2023), with carpenters at risk from struck-by incidents (20%) and falls (40%). Hard hats and fall protection harnesses were critical in reducing these risks.
- In 2021, WorkSafeBC recorded 5,432 lost-time claims in construction, with 15% linked to inadequate PPE during carpentry tasks like cutting or sanding. Eye injuries from sawdust and hand injuries from tools were prevalent.
- In 2024, Eye and Face Protection (29 CFR 1926.102) was the 9th most cited OSHA violation in construction, with 2,123 citations, often due to inadequate or missing safety glasses during carpentry tasks like drilling.