PPE Eyes Stats and Facts

DID YOU KNOW?

Every year, 800,000 eye injuries occur on the job, including 36,000 that require time off from work. But according to eye health and safety organization Prevent Blindness America, wearing proper eye protection can prevent 90 percent of all eye injuries.

Common causes of workplace eye injuries include chemical burns, cuts, lacerations and punctures. These injuries most frequently occur in production, transportation and service industries.

“Our vision is something that so many people take for granted until it’s damaged,” said Daniel D. Garrett, senior vice president of Prevent Blindness America. “We hope to encourage employers and employees to make sure that eye protection is on the ‘to do’ list every day.”

Prevent Blindness America recommends the following methods and actions to reduce and prevent eye injuries in the workplace:

- Be aware of potential eye safety hazards at work and complete an eye hazard assessment.
- Appropriate safety glasses or goggles should be worn at all times whenever eye hazards are present.
- Be sure all safety eyewear is clearly marked “ANSI Z87.”
- Workers should know the location of the nearest eye wash station and should be trained in its use.
- Employers should be notified immediately if safety hazards are discovered.
- Employees should have regular eye exams to make sure their vision is adequate to work safely.
- Employees with reduced vision should ask if prescription glasses or goggles can be provided.

According to the Department of Labor, eye injuries are responsible for an estimated loss of $300 million annually in lost production time, medical expenses and workers’ compensation.

“Not only does practicing eye safety at work make good business sense, most importantly, it is integral in ensuring the health of employees, which is any company’s most valuable asset,” Garrett said.

Think of the hundreds of times you’ve completed a task at work without eye protection, injury free. Perhaps the application doesn’t seem that hazardous, or maybe the safety glasses you have are uncomfortable, scratched up, or they fog too easily. Plus, you’re good at what you do. You’ve been doing this job for so long that being careful is second nature.

Until that one time when “being careful” wasn’t enough. It wasn’t your fault. In fact, you did everything right. Unfortunately, the tool you were using randomly failed, a coworker didn’t set up the workspace properly, a machine malfunctioned…whatever it was…IT happened.

Accidents happen every day, and usually in situations you’ve become all-to-comfortable with.

300,000 workplace eye injuries send people to the emergency room each year nationwide. [1] In most cases, safety eyewear is not being worn, it doesn’t fit, or doesn’t provide the appropriate protection for the application.

Of these 300,000 eye injuries, it’s estimated that 90% of them were preventable if the workers had been wearing (appropriate) eye protection.

That’s 270,000 workplace injuries that could be avoided each year.

Consider these other eye-opening injury statistics:

- Eye injuries make up nearly 45% of all head injuries that lead to missed work days. [2]
- Eye injuries account for an estimated annual $300 million in medical bills, compensation, and time off. [2]
- Men ages 25-44 comprise 80% of all workplace eye injury victims. [2]

- 40% of on-the-job eye injuries happen in the manufacturing, construction, and mining industries. [1]

Considering these staggering stats, why aren't workers wearing their safety eyewear? Here are a few common reasons we've heard from customers:

- **It's unwearable.**

Cheaply made safety eyewear becomes more of a distraction than a means of protection. Pressure, pinching and slipping points create an ergonomic nightmare for workers, and protective eyewear ends up on top of workers' heads or in their pockets instead of over their eyes.

- **It's "unnecessary."**

Despite decades of reported eye injury experiences and how to prevent them, human ignorance and resistance are still big problems. Many workers think of eye protection as unnecessary and choose to not wear their required eye protection.

- **It's fogging.**

In a recent study[3] with manufacturing, construction, service, and retail workers, 100% of participants reported fogging as a major factor for not wearing their PPE on the job. They can't see with the fogged-up eyewear, so naturally, they take them off. In the same study, 55% said that if their safety eyewear had working anti-fogging technology, they'd comply with wearing it.

- **It's uncool.** Let's face it, sporting safety eyewear hasn't always been the most glamorous look. Everyone likes to wear things they feel good in, so it's no surprise that safety eyewear falls to the wayside for some.

Remember, the best eye protection is the protection that's worn.

At HexArmor, we believe that it's not just about protecting your eyes, it's about protecting your most critical sense – your sight. You perceive up to 80% of all impressions by means of sight. If your other senses are compromised, it's your eyes that will best

protect from danger, not to mention provide a more rewarding life. Preserving and protecting this organ is critical.

When it comes to choosing the right protective eyewear for your application, one size does not fit all. Ultimately, it is personal protective equipment, right? At HexArmor, we're committed to high-comfort design and technology, permanent anti-fog coatings that do not wash off, uncompromised scratch resistance, and complete protection no matter the task. All of these wearability factors will positively affect compliance, leading to fewer injuries, so that you don't become a statistic.