How to Help your Employees be Compliant with OSHA

4 Areas of Focus
Outline

To help your employees and your company to be compliant with OSHA, there are four areas you should focus on.

1. **Understand the Standards:** How to tell if safety glasses meet the latest Z87 standards.

2. **Employee Safety Education:** How to educate employees about safety glasses.

3. **Improve Daily Compliance:** How to get employees to wear their glasses.

4. **Corporate Compliance:** How to know if your company is compliant with OSHA standards for safety glasses.
1. Understand the Standards

How can you and your employees identify if the safety glasses they’re wearing comply with OSHA standards? For employees to be compliant with OSHA, check their safety glasses to see if they meet the minimum standards. There are three parts that have to be examined for compliance with the latest Z87 standards: the frame, side shields and lenses.

- **The Frame**: The frame of approved safety glasses will have “Z87.2” permanently stamped into the frame on the main parts of the frame (the front, temple, and bridge).
1. Understand the Standards

- **Side shields**: The safety glass frames must include side shields that are either clip-on or permanently attached. The side shields must also be the original ones created by the manufacturer for the frame being worn.
  - **Clip-on Side Shields**: Clip-on side shields means they clip-on to the safety glasses. The advantage for the employee is the side shields can be removed for wearing the glasses at home. Employers don’t like clip-on side shields because they are easier for employees to lose and therefore not in compliance with safety regulations.
  - **Permanently Attached Side Shields**: Permanently attached side shields are attached to the temple of the frame (in what is called the “t lock”) and locks the side shield on the temple so that it can’t be removed. The main advantage of having permanent side shields is that workers cannot remove the side shields from the safety glasses, thus ensuring safety and compliance.
1. Understand the Standards

- **Lenses:** Safety lenses must meet a minimum thickness requirement, depending upon the material used. Just because you have a polycarbonate prescription lens does not mean the lens qualify as a safety lens and meets safety standards.
  - To be sure your lenses are safety lenses, check to see if the lenses are stamped with the manufacturer’s identification. Each optical laboratory uses their own identification letters for various purposes. For example, Hi-Tech Optical’s identification letters are as follows:
    - H+: high impact polycarbonate standard
    - H+ν: high impact polycarbonate and photochromatic (changes color)
    - HT: not high impact resistant lens
    - HTV: photochromatic not high impact resistant lens
    - H+S: high impact polycarbonate lens plus tint
    - *Contact your optical laboratory to understand the identification letters on your lenses.*
2. Employee Safety Education

*How can you educate employees about eye safety?* When conducting employee safety training, include information about eye safety and safety glasses, such as information/statistics, OSHA regulations, care and maintenance, video/pictures of eye injuries, and the company policy. Information and statistics about eye injuries:

- There are 2.4 million eye injuries annually in America. With the use of eye protection, at least 90% of them could be prevented.
- 70% of eye injuries occur from flying, falling objects or sparks that strike eyes. It is estimated that three-fifths of the objects are smaller than a pinhead traveling faster than a hand-thrown object.
- Amongst workers with eye injuries, 3 out of 5 were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.
- Due to the eye injury, the injured employee will suffer the pain from the injury, as well as lost time at work and possible physical impairment.
- Prevent Blindness America has recognized more than 86,000 people who avoided losing their sight in a workplace accident because they were wearing proper eye protection.
2. Employee Safety Education

- **OSHA regulation information** about requirements for the company.
  - According to 29CFR1910.133, employers are required to meet standards in eye safety. Some of the language includes:
    - “The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses appropriate eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, acids or caustic liquids, chemical gases or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation.”
  - In an OSHA audit, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) programs are evaluated for compliance. If a company’s safety program doesn’t adhere to legal requirements, OSHA can impose fines.
2. Employee Safety Education

- Care and maintenance of your safety eyewear is important too. Below are 4 tips:
  1. Do not use harsh solvents on the lenses. To clean, only use approved lens cleaning solutions or hot soapy water. To wipe the lenses, only use a soft cotton or anti-lint cleaning cloth. Never use paper products, such as napkins, hand towels or tissue on your lenses. (If you wipe your lenses without water or a solution, you are grinding the dust and debris into your lenses and scratching them. Make it a standard to use an approved liquid or water on your lenses before wiping to ensure good maintenance.)
  2. Keep safety glasses in the appropriate eye case when not in use.
  3. Make sure the glasses fit properly and continue to fit well. If they get loose, have them adjusted. (If the glasses become severely bent, return them to a qualified optician for repair. If they cannot be repaired, they need to be replaced.)
  4. Have the temples tightened and nose pads replaced when needed to ensure they stay in place and are comfortable.
2. Employee Safety Education

- **Show a video or pictures of eye injuries** and the repercussions of not wearing safety glasses.

- **Explain the company safety glasses policy**, including:
  - How and when employees are eligible for new safety glasses (typically every 1-2 years)
  - When employees can get new safety lenses (typically every year)
  - Locations for repairs and replacement (internal and external resources)
2. Employee Safety Education

- **Hang safety glass or eye injury posters** in the workplace or break room that give warnings or show actual eye injuries to help remind employees of the importance of wearing safety eyewear.

- **Initiate an entire safety program** to record the number of days without a safety incident, with potential reward benefits attached to specific goals.

- **Enforce a worker program** that employees found without their safety glasses will be sent home.
3. Improve Daily Compliance

*How can you get employees to wear their glasses every day, all day long?* Beyond the previous items already identified, to gain the greatest employee acceptance of a safety eyewear program, you’ll want to provide a wide variety of frame shapes, styles and colors to suit the wearer's individual facial structure and skin tone, as well as job specifications.

- **Fit the Employee:** Wearing safety glasses that do not fit properly increases discomfort and risk and decreases the likelihood that the employee will wear them.
  - Glasses that are too big can slip off or provide easy access to the eyes through the gaps around the nose or sides of the face. Glasses that are too small won’t cover enough of the eye area and can be uncomfortable to wear, causing the wearer to remove them frequently or stop wearing the glasses completely.
3. Improve Daily Compliance

- **Fit the Job:** Choosing the wrong eye protection for the job may not provide the protection needed, whether it is related to temperature, moisture, light or any other factor. For example, you could have poor vision wearing the wrong safety glasses due to fog, scratches, reflection, bright lights, or even too much tint or shading.

In addition to providing a wide selection, utilize incentives and ongoing reminders to improve daily compliance as well, such as:

- **Run a Competition:** Initiative a program with reward benefits such as prizes or gift certificates for wearing protection equipment.
- **Frequently Meetings:** Conduct monthly or quarterly safety meetings to show videos and demonstrations of various eye injuries encountered in the work place.
4. Corporate Compliance

*How do you know if your company is compliant with OSHA standards for safety glasses?* For corporate compliance, there are three areas you should consider: supply to employees, sustained usability, and visitors.

- **Supply to Employees:** Check with your supplier to confirm that the frames and lenses comply with the latest Z87 standards.

- **Sustained Usability:** Do everything possible to make sure employees wear their necessary safety glasses at all times. Inform employees that have visitors about the visitor eye safety policy.
4. Corporate Compliance

- **Visitors:** There is an OSHA safety glass mandate for visitors that requires them to wear clear non-prescription safety glasses in specified areas of your facility. Visitors must wear these safety glasses over their normal dress glasses to meet the OSHA mandate.
  - There must also be dispensing locations near the entrance of the manufacturing locations, with a supply of clear non-prescription safety glasses.
  - Visitors found without the proper protection should be forced to leave the plant.
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