



ON THE JOB FUNDAMENTALS

By Anthony Magaro

From top to bottom: How I use PPE on the job site

THERE IS MORE to personal protection than just operating the equipment and handling materials in our trade safely. You and your employees can go the extra mile with personal protection equipment.

Here's how I approach PPE, from top to bottom:

Eye protection: I use safety glasses that fit tightly to my cheeks, as most hazards pop up from below. These are especially helpful when mixing liquids. For impact resistance, look for the ANSI Z87 rating. Also remember to keep an eye glass cup in your first aid kit.

Ear protection: To avoid noise-induced hearing loss, the CDC recommends avoiding prolonged exposure to ambient sounds above 70 decibels. I use any well-fitting earplugs that allow for some noise from the outside but

block the harmful decibels that may cause damage, yet still allow me to hear my sanding equipment to make sure it's running properly.

Lung protection: I always wear a respirator. For wood dust, particulate filters are sufficient, but when sanding all finishes, I use organic vapor cartridges with the particulate filter. When applying stains or finishes, I use only the organic vapor cartridge. You should wash your mask after each use and ensure that the baffles are functioning properly. Vapor cartridges should be stored in a sealed plastic bag between use and replaced when required.

Hand protection: I always wear gloves for repairs and installs, but my fingertips are exposed for feel. A quick finger tip (no pun intended): I use sawdust and wood glue to cover my fingertips. This has saved me from countless splinters, and it's very easy to wash off and remove. When staining, finishing, and cleaning up, I've found nitrile gloves are the best. Liquid vapors can be absorbed through the eyes and skin pores, so keep liquids at bay and wear your gloves.

Knee protection: This is a personal choice, and many people have their favorite knee pads, but I prefer pants with built-in knee pads. I find they don't restrict my motion and are very comfortable to wear whether I am on or off my knees. What's most important is that you protect your knees!

Foot protection: Steel-toed boots or shoes are practical for carrying and operating heavy equipment. When wearing boots, I wear calf-length socks that can easily be pulled down over my laces, which can help prevent loosening and snagging. When finishing floors, I prefer sneakers with non-marking soles (think white) with little or no tread.

First aid kit: Always keep a first aid kit handy. I keep one in each personal vehicle, as well as each work vehicle, and I also have one that I carry into every job for quick access.

PPE: Please Protect Everyone

PS: Eat healthy and stretch often! ■

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This is what I use to stay safe on a job site. Safety first!