

OSHA Updates Personal Protective Equipment Standards

New Federal OSHA standards go into effect Oct. 9, 2009 revising the PPE sections of general industry, long-shoring and marine terminal standards regarding the requirements for eye and face protective devices, head and foot protection. The changes are likely only to affect the employer's process used to determine the adequacy of equipment currently used by workers and specific protective equipment used after October 9th.

Summary of revisions:

- The new standards update references to recognize more recent editions of the applicable national consensus standards.
- Deletes editions of the national consensus standards that PPE must meet if purchased before a specified date.
- Requires safety shoes to meet the most recent ANSI consensus standards.
- Filter lenses and plates for eye-protection equipment must meet a test for radiant-energy transmissions specified in another ANSI standard.
- OSHA will require safety shoes and eye protection equipment to comply with the applicable PPE design provisions by replacing the references to specific national consensus standards with a performance-oriented "good-design" requirements.
- The new rule provides guidance on how employers could meet the good design requirement and includes non-compulsory appendices listing those national consensus standards that OSHA has determined will meet the good-design requirement.
- The new standards also delete out-of-date consensus standards to allow employers to continue using PPE they had purchased before a specified date.
- The new rule does not alter the duties of employers because it provides employers with additional options under the design-criteria revisions of OSHA PPE standards.

These revisions are a continuation of OSHA's effort to update or remove references to specific consensus and industry standards located throughout its regulations. To ensure that appendices remained useful in the future, OSHA will use direct-final rulemaking to incorporate future editions of consensus standards into the non-compulsory appendices.

To read and learn more about the new standards, go to <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-21360.pdf>