

New Safety Order Requires Deployment of Personal Protective Equipment

By Michael Boldt, NHA, ARM

As of April 17, 2011 California Employers are required to determine if hazards are present or are likely to be present for which personal protective equipment (PPE) are needed. If PPE are needed, the PPE must be effectively deployed by the employer. General Industrial Safety Order §3380 was adopted on March 17, 2011 and went into effect on the abovementioned date.

The workplace hazard assessment process must be verified through written certification to comply with the new safety order. Employers must communicate selection decisions to affected employees and make sure PPE properly fits each of them. Defective PPE shall not be used. Lastly, employees must be trained (and retrained as required) regarding the use of applicable PPE.

Required topics include:

- When PPE is necessary
- Which PPE is necessary
- How to properly don, doff, adjust and wear PPE
- The limitations of PPE
- Care, Maintenance and useful life and disposal of PPE

For some industries there are already PPE requirements related to specific hazards. Healthcare providers, for instance, must evaluate the need for respiratory protection and have a documented Aerosol Transmissible Disease (ATD) mitigation plan. Painters and manufacturers are required to have a written Respiratory Protection Plan if their employees will be exposed to harmful fumes. This new rule simply adds a catchall regarding PPE. If an employee is injured, and PPE would have prevented or mitigated the injury, Cal/OSHA now has yet another safety rule on which to base a fine.

It is important for all employers to develop and maintain a list of workplace hazards, specific to their workplace, through a documented process, and consider mitigation options for those hazards listed. Mitigation options should include: Administrative Controls, Engineering Controls, Personal Protective Equipment, Procedural Controls and Training. Having a canned IIPP on the shelf does not comply with Cal/OSHA requirements.

Please consider Boldt Risk Management Solutions as a source for professional guidance in developing an effective Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) that will create a safer environment for your employees and address Cal/OSHA regulatory requirements.

About the Author:

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