

# THE SAFETY OBSERVER

Safety Information for Employees

## PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

There are many types of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that, when used properly, contribute to safer and more efficient work practices. The operation and maintenance of an apartment community requires use of the more common forms of PPE items like gloves, goggles, earplugs, face shields, etc.

Although PPE is to help protect you from an injury or accident, you must keep in mind that using the wrong PPE, or excessive PPE can actually cause an injury or accident. Also, PPE must always be used in conjunction with good judgment and not solely relied on for protection. Just because you are wearing a back-belt doesn't mean you can lift anything without getting hurt.

1. Each property's Maintenance Supervisor must assess the hazards of their property and acquire the appropriate PPE for each employee that meets ANSI standards.
2. OSHA requires employers to provide PPE and train employees on their use.
3. All employees must know how to obtain, properly use, and maintain PPE to accomplish their tasks safely.
4. Make choosing the necessary PPE part of the same process of choosing tools and materials needed to perform a job.
5. If the necessary PPE is not available, notify your supervisor.
6. Inspect PPE prior to use and report any damage to your supervisor immediately. Using gloves with holes or goggles that are all scratched up actually impair your work performance and can create a hazard in itself.
7. Choose the appropriate gloves for each of the many types of potential hand injuries. The wrong kind of gloves can actually cause an accident.
8. Keep gloves and goggles with you at all times. You are likely to need them throughout the day.
9. Wear shoes or boots that will protect your feet from impact, scrapes, punctures, heat, cold, and any prevailing hazard on the property. Like all PPE, overly worn or torn shoes are lacking their protective properties, and worn soles can affect balance and traction.
10. Back belts are good additional support when used in conjunction with proper lifting technique.
11. Earplugs are to be used around noisy machinery.
12. Flying objects are usually unexpected, so keep your goggles on when working with key machines, hammering, cutting wood, using a leaf blower, pressure cleaning, trimming shrubbery, sanding, and using hand tools.
13. Clean your PPE after each day of use, and store in a dry location.

**Use your PPE. Don't just make it available. Goggles around your neck won't protect your eyes, and gloves in your toolbox aren't going to help your hands.**