

Code of Practice

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT BASICS

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WHAT IS A CODE OF PRACTICE?

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) Codes of Practice (COP) provide practical guidance to achieve the safety requirements of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Safety Acts and related Regulations.

Codes of Practice come into effect in each territory on the day they are published in the Northwest Territories Gazette and Nunavut Gazette.

Codes of Practice do not have the same legal force as the *Acts*, the *Mining Regulations*, or the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*. A person or employer cannot face prosecution for failing to comply with a COP. They are considered industry best practice and may be a consideration when determining whether an employer or worker has complied with the *Safety Acts* and *Regulations* in legal proceedings.

As per subsection 18(3) of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut *Safety Acts*, "For the purpose of providing practical guidance with respect to the requirements of any provision of this Act or the regulations, the Chief Safety Officer may approve and issue such codes of practice as he or she considers are suitable for that purpose."

Employers and workers should follow WSCC Codes of Practice unless there is an alternative course of action that achieves the same or better occupational health and safety outcomes.

A Code of Practice

- Provides practical guidelines.
- Adapts to individual work sites.
- May serve as evidence.
- Should be followed unless there's a better way.

Copies of this code are available online from the WSCC at: wsc.n.t.ca or wsc.n.u.ca

If you would like this code of practice in another language, please contact us.

FOREWORD

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) produced this industry code of practice in accordance with subsections 18(3) and 18(4) of the *Northwest Territories and Nunavut Safety Acts*.

The WSCC gratefully acknowledges the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) for information used in the Personal Protective Equipment Basics code of practice.

The *Personal Protective Equipment - Basics* code of practice relates to sections 4 and 5 of the *Safety Act* and sections and Part 3 sections 13, 16, 18, 23, 24 and 26, Part 6 sections 74, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94,95, 96, 100 and 102, Part 7 PPE in full, Part 8 sections 111 to 117, Part 9 sections 118 to 122, 128, 131, 132, 133, 138 and 139, Part 12 sections 192, 194, 195, 198 and 299, Part 18 section 281, Part 20 sections 290 to 308, Part 21 sections 316 and 320, Part 23 section 360, Part 24 section 374, 378 and 387, and Part 31 section 466 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*.

This code is in effect as published in the in the Northwest Territories *Gazette* and Nunavut *Gazette*, in accordance with the *Safety Acts and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations*.

IN EFFECT DATES:

Northwest Territories: June 1, 2015

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REVIEWED AND CONFIRMED: August 30, 2022.



Chief Safety Officer, WSCC

Disclaimer

This publication refers to obligations under the workers' compensation and occupational health and safety legislation as administered by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

To ensure compliance with legal obligations always refer to the most recent legislation. This publication may refer to legislation that has been amended or repealed.

Check for information on the latest legislation at wsc.nt.ca or wsc.nu.ca, or contact WSCC at 1-800-661-0792.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This code of practice provides basic guidelines to ensure worker safety in the workplace through the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

PPE Basics is the first in a series of codes on the different types of PPE required by the Northwest Territories and Nunavut *Safety Acts* and *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* to protect workers from hazards. Other topics in this series include: *Hand and Arm Protection*, *Head Protection*, *Hearing Protection*, *Eye and Face Protection*, *Fall Protection*, *Respiratory Protection*, *Foot Protection*, *High-Visibility Apparel* and *Commercial Diving Operations*.

PPE is equipment worn by workers to minimize exposure to occupational hazards including physical, electrical, heat, chemical, biological and airborne hazards. PPE cannot eliminate a hazard, but can reduce the risk of injury.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* require workers to use, properly care for, and inspect PPE. They also require employers to provide PPE at no cost to the worker and provide training to the worker on proper use of PPE.

Definition

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – any clothing, device, or other article for workers to use to prevent injury or to facilitate rescue.



Hearing Protection



Protective Footwear



Hand Protection



High-Visibility Clothing



Safety Helmet & Eye Wear



Safety Harness

PPE USAGE IS SPECIFIC TO EVERY WORK SITE AND JOB HAZARD ASSESSMENT

2 PPE AND HAZARD CONTROL

Decisions about PPE form part of the hazard assessment process, the standard work site approach to dealing with potential hazards. There are five basic ways to control hazards. These controls form a hierarchy. Elimination is always the first control to consider. After that, proceed down the hierarchy until the control of last resort, PPE.

THE FIVE BASIC WAYS TO CONTROL HAZARDS AND EXAMPLES:

1. **Elimination** (remove the hazard from the work site)
2. **Substitution** (use a less harmful chemical)
3. **Engineering** (isolate equipment/set guards)
4. **Administration** (provide training/maintenance)
5. **Personal Protective Equipment** (provide gloves/goggles)

The use of PPE does not prevent accidents or eliminate hazards. Make every effort to control all hazards at the source. Training is also important. PPE cannot achieve its full-protection potential without worker knowledge and cooperation.

Several controls may have to be put in place. Certain hazards may require multiple PPE solutions. For example, working with chlorine requires respiratory and eye protection because chlorine irritates both the respiratory system and the mucous membranes of the eyes.

Wearing PPE should not add to the hazard or create a new hazard. For instance, proper glove selection can prevent skin damage, but gloves worn while working with moving equipment can create an entanglement hazard. Using different types of protection at the same time i.e. hard hat, ear muffs and goggles, should not increase the risk to the worker.

PPE design criteria cannot cover all eventualities. Do not use PPE when its usage creates hazards greater than those for which it is designed. Take uncertainties into account when evaluating potential hazards.

For more information see the PPE Codes of Practice and the [Hazard Assessment Code of Practice](https://www.wsc.nt.ca) at [wsc.nt.ca](https://www.wsc.nt.ca)

3 CSA STANDARDS

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) is an accredited standards development organization and certification body.

The standards they develop define requirements for reducing the risk of workplace injuries. Canadian Safety Standards can be found at <https://www.csagroup.org/store/>

CSA Group test and certify products to Canadian standards and issue the CSA Mark for qualified products.



Identifying Mark of Approved Equipment

- 23.** (1) This section applies in respect of equipment and personal protective equipment that is required by these regulations to be approved by an agency.
- (2) An employer or supplier shall ensure that the approval of equipment and personal protective equipment by an agency is evidenced by a seal, stamp, logo or similar identifying mark of the agency indicating such approval, affixed on (a) the equipment or personal protective equipment; or (b) the packaging accompanying the equipment or personal protective equipment.

[NWT & NU Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Section 23(1)]

CAN/CSA-Z94.1:15 (R2020)

| | |
|----------------|---|
| CAN/CSA | Stands for Canada and the Canadian Standards Association. |
| Z94.1 | Lettering between CAN/CSA and the last two digits represent the internal CSA coding of the relevant standard. In this case the coding refers to the standard on Industrial Protective Headwear - Performance, Selection, Care, and Use. |
| 15 | The last two digits indicate the year issued. |
| (R2020) | Reaffirmed in 2020. |

Technological and research developments result in regular updates to standards. When the standard is updated, the end of the CSA reference changes. The new standard becomes the standard that applies.

MAKE SURE YOU USE THE MOST UP-TO-DATE STANDARD

4 CSA STANDARDS FOR PPE

*CSA View Access for this document available for viewers in Canada.

| CODE OF PRACTICE | CSA EDITION | STANDARD TITLE | APPLICABLE REGULATIONS |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| HEAD PROTECTION | Z94.1:15 (R2020) | Industrial Protective Headwear - Performance, Selection, Care, and Use (view access) | PART 7 PPE Sections 90, 94, 95 and 96. |
| HEARING PROTECTION | Z94.2:14 (R2019) | Hearing Protection Devices – Performance, Selection, Care and Use (view access) | PART 3 Sections 13, 16, 18, 23 and 24 PART 7 – PPE Sections 89 and 90 PART 8 Noise Control and Hearing Conservation Sections 111 to 117 |
| | Z1007:22 | Hearing Loss Prevention Program (HLPP) Management | |
| | Z107.56:18 | Measurement of Noise Exposure | |
| | Z107.58:15 (R2020) | Noise Emission Declarations for Machinery | |
| | Z107.6:16 (R2020) | Audiometric Testing for Use in Hearing Loss Prevention Programs | |
| EYE AND FACE PROTECTION | Z94.3:20 | Eye and Face Protectors (view access) | PART 7 PPE Sections 89, 90, 97, 102 and Sections 151, 153, 320, 358, 360 and 466 |
| | Z94.3.1:16 | Guideline for Selection, Use, and Care of Protective Eyewear (view access) | |
| RESPIRATORY PROTECTION | Z94.4:18 | Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators (view access) | PART 3 Sections 13, 16, 23 PART 7 PPE Sections 89, 90, 91, 92, 93 and 102 and Sections 281, 316, 374, 378, 387 and 466 |
| | Z94.4.1:21 | Performance of Filtering Respirators (view access) | |
| | Z180.1:19 | Compressed Breathing Air and Systems (view access) | |
| | Z1610:11 (R2021) | Protection of First Responders from Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Events | |

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|--------------------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| FOOT PROTECTION | Z195:14 (R2019) | <u>Protective Footwear</u> (view access) | PART 3 Sections 13, 16, 23, 26, PART 7 PPE Sections 74, 89, 90, 100 |
| | Z195.1:16 | <u>Guideline on Selection, Care, and Use of Protective Footwear</u> | |
| HIGH-VISIBILITY APPAREL | Z96:22 | <u>High-Visibility Safety Apparel</u> | Sections 13, 16, 23, 26 74, 89, 90, 94,138 , 139 |
| FALL PROTECTION | Z259.19:22 | <u>Managed fall protection training</u> | PART 7- PPE Sections 103 to 110 PART 9 - SAFEGUARDS Sections 118 to 122, 128, 131, 132 and 133 PART 12 Sections 192, 194, 195, 198, 200 PART 18 Section 281 |
| | Z259.18:19 | <u>Counterweighted guardrail systems</u> | |
| | Z259.17:21 | <u>Selection and use of active fall-protection equipment and systems</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.16:21 | <u>Design of active fall-protection systems</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.15:22 | <u>Anchorage connectors</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.14:12 (R2021) | <u>Fall restrict equipment for wood pole climbing</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.13:16 (R2020) | <u>Manufactured horizontal lifeline systems</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.12:16 (R2021) | <u>Connecting components for personal fall-arrest systems (PFAS)</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.11:17 (R2021) | <u>Personal energy absorbers and lanyards</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.10:18 | <u>Full body harnesses</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.2.5:17 (R2021) | <u>Fall arresters and vertical lifelines</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.2.4:15 (R2020) | <u>Fall arresters and vertical rigid rails</u> (view access) | |

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|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| FALL PROTECTION | Z259.2.3:16 (R2020) | <u>Descent devices</u> | |
| | Z259.2.2:17 (R2022) | <u>Self-retracting devices</u> (view access) | |
| | Z259.1:05 (R2020) | <u>Body belts and saddles for work positioning and travel restraint</u> (view access) | |
| COMMERCIAL DIVING OPERATIONS | Z275.1:16 (R2021) | <u>Hyperbaric Facilities</u> (view access) | <p>PART 3 sections 13, 16, 23, 24</p> <p>PART 7 PPE sections 74, 88, 89, 90 and 101</p> <p>PART 20 Diving Operations sections 290 to 308</p> |
| | Z275.2:20 | <u>Occupational Safety Code for Diving Operations</u> | |
| | Z275.3:09 (R2021) | <u>Occupational Safety Code for Work in Compressed Air Environment</u> (view access) | |
| | Z275.4:22 | <u>Occupational Diver Training</u> (view access) | |
| | Z275.6:16 (R2021) | <u>Unexploded Explosive Ordnance (UXO), Munitions, and Police Explosive Diving</u> | |

5 PPE PROGRAM

Consider the underlying principles of protection strategies before deciding to begin or expand a PPE program.

Three principles to consider:

1. Protection of Workers
2. Compliance with Applicable Laws / Regulations/ Internal Company Standards
3. Technical Feasibility and Comfort to Worker

PROGRAM DESIGN

A program needs to be planned, developed and implemented carefully. Make the benefits of the program known and set a target date for compliance well ahead of time. Allow workers time to become familiar with the PPE. The greater the workers' involvement in all stages of the program, the more effective the implementation and operation. Users of PPE need training in use and maintenance of the PPE.

Both the employer and Joint OHS Committee members should be familiar with:

- Applicable personal protective equipment and its limitations.
- How to ensure PPE is working and used properly.

A PPE Program cannot be gradually phased in when:

- work requires entering hazardous atmospheres, or
 - failure to use PPE poses a significant risk of injury.
-

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

A good PPE program consists of six essential elements:

1. Hazard Assessment
2. Standard and Legislation Review
3. Selection
4. Training
5. Maintenance
6. Review

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

5.1 HAZARD ASSESSMENT

The first step in the development of a PPE program is to identify the hazards at the work site. Work practices, job procedures, equipment, workplace layout, and individual factors play a role in the type of controls recommended for a certain job. Make every effort to control all hazards at the source. Do not use PPE until the employer has taken all the necessary measures in terms of engineering controls, work practices, administrative controls, and hygiene, to control the hazard.

5.2 REVIEW STANDARDS & LEGISLATION

Review performance requirements of standards to ensure PPE will minimize or eliminate exposure to injury. If PPE is exposed to hazards greater than those for which it is designed, it will not deliver adequate protection. In Canada, various standards exist. Use the most recent standard when selecting PPE.

5.3 SELECTION

Criteria:

- Degree of Protection
- Appropriate Design

Guidelines for Selection:

A) Match PPE to Hazard

Choose the right PPE to match the hazard. In some jobs workers continually perform the same task. In other jobs workers may be face different hazards. For instance, a welder requires protection against welding gasses (respirator), harmful light rays (welder's goggles), and molten metal and flying chips (gloves, welding hood, welding helmet).

B) Involve Workers

Involve workers in valuations of PPE to gain information on fit, comfort and acceptability. Allow for personal preferences and flexibility with choice of PPE, as long as it meets the required legislation and standards.

C) Check the Fit

It is important to fit each worker with PPE individually. Certain fitting programs require qualified personnel. Some types of equipment, like respirators, require annual fit testing to ensure they fit the face of the individual worker. Show workers how to wear and maintain PPE at the time of fitting.

5.4 TRAINING

Workers and their supervisors need training in when, where, why, and how to use the equipment to achieve the necessary level of protection. All workers need training, whether exposed on a regular or occasional basis, for example, in emergencies or with temporary work in dangerous areas.

Training includes:

- How to fit and wear PPE.
- Why the PPE is necessary.
- How to adjust it for maximum protection.
- How to care for the PPE.

5.5 MAINTENANCE

Wearing poorly maintained or malfunctioning PPE can be more dangerous than not wearing any protection. Without proper maintenance the effectiveness of PPE cannot be assured. The most important part of maintenance is the need for continuing inspection. Discard PPE not performing to manufacturers' specifications. Set up procedures to enable workers to obtain replacement parts for damaged PPE and keep it clean.

Maintenance Includes: Inspection, Care, Cleaning, Repair, And Storage.

5.6 REVIEW

Monitor the effectiveness of the PPE program by inspecting the equipment and auditing procedures. The Joint OHS Committee and employer should develop inspection schedules for the following components of the PPE program: policies, plans, and procedures.

- Evaluate whether the equipment is used regularly and appropriately.
- Review the program at least annually.
- Review critical areas more frequently.
- Review and compare production and safety performance records.

6 LEGISLATION

Part 3: General Duties of Workers in the *Regulations* emphasizes that workers may not opt out of using PPE when the *Regulations* determine that the task they perform requires PPE to keep workers safe.

Employers must ensure their supervisors know what PPE is required at a work site, and how to use and maintain it properly. The employer is also responsible for ensuring workers use PPE.

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations **Northwest Territories and Nunavut**

Part 3 GENERAL DUTIES

General Duties of Workers

- 13.** A worker shall, in respect of a work site,
- (a) use safeguards, safety equipment and personal protective equipment required by these regulations; and
 - (b) follow safe work practices and procedures required by or developed under these regulations.

Supervision of Work

- 16.** (1) An employer shall ensure that, at a work site,
- (b) supervisors have sufficient knowledge of the following:
 - (iii) the need for, and safe use of, personal protective equipment

Identifying Mark of Approved Equipment

- 23.** (1) This section applies in respect of equipment and personal protective equipment that is required by these regulations to be approved by an agency.
- (2) An employer or supplier shall ensure that the approval of equipment and personal protective equipment by an agency is evidenced by a seal, stamp, logo or similar identifying mark of the agency indicating such approval, affixed on
- (a) the equipment or personal protective equipment; or
 - (b) the packaging accompanying the equipment or personal protective equipment.

Maintenance and Repair of Equipment

- 24.** (1) An employer shall ensure that equipment is maintained at intervals that are sufficient to ensure the safe functioning of the equipment.
- 2) If a defect is found in equipment, an employer shall ensure that, as soon as is reasonably possible,
- (a) steps are taken, until the defect is corrected, to protect the health

and safety of workers who could be endangered; and
(b) the defect is corrected by a competent worker or the equipment is replaced.

- (3) A worker who knows or has reason to believe that equipment under his or her control is in an unsafe condition shall, as soon as is reasonably possible,
- (a) report the condition of the equipment to the employer; and
 - (b) repair the equipment, if the worker is authorized and competent to do so, or replace the equipment or remove the equipment from service.

Prohibited Use of Compressed Air

- 26.** An employer shall ensure that no compressed air is directed towards a worker for
- (a) the purpose of cleaning clothing or personal protective equipment; or
 - (b) any other purpose, if the use of compressed air could cause dispersion into the air of contaminants that could be harmful to workers.

Part 6

GENERAL HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Thermal Conditions

- 74.** (4) If a worker is required or permitted to work in thermal conditions that are different from those associated with the worker's normal duties, an employer shall provide and require the worker to use suitable clothing or other personal protective equipment necessary to protect the health and safety of the worker.

Exposure Control Plan

- 88.** (3) An exposure control plan must
- (i) set out the methods of cleaning, disinfecting or disposing of clothing, personal protective equipment or other equipment contaminated with an infectious material or organism that must be followed, and indicate who is responsible for carrying out those activities;

Part 7

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Suitable and Adequate Equipment

- 89.** (1) If it is not reasonably possible to protect the health and safety of a worker by design of a plant and work processes, suitable work practices or administrative controls, an employer shall ensure that the worker wears or uses suitable and adequate personal protective equipment.
- (2) If personal protective equipment will not effectively protect a worker, an employer shall, if reasonably possible, provide alternative work arrangements for the worker.

General Responsibilities

90. (1) An employer who is required by these regulations to provide personal protective equipment to a worker shall
- (a) provide approved personal protective equipment for use by the worker at no cost to the worker;
 - (b) ensure that the personal protective equipment is used by the worker;
 - (c) ensure that the personal protective equipment is at the work site before work begins;
 - (d) ensure that the personal protective equipment is stored in a clean, secure location that is readily accessible to the worker;
 - (e) ensure that the worker is
 - (i) aware of the location of the personal protective equipment, and
 - (ii) trained in its use;
 - (f) inform the worker of the reasons why the personal protective equipment is required to be used and of the limitations of its protection; and
 - (g) ensure that personal protective equipment provided to the worker is
 - (i) suitable and adequate and a proper fit for the worker,
 - (ii) maintained and kept in a sanitary condition, and
 - (iii) removed from use or service when damaged.
- (2) If an employer requires a worker to clean and maintain personal protective equipment, the employer shall ensure that the worker has adequate time to do so during normal working hours without loss of pay or benefits.
- (3) If reasonably possible, an employer shall make appropriate adjustments to the work procedures and the rate of work to eliminate or reduce any danger or discomfort to the worker that could arise from the worker's use of personal protective equipment.
- (4) A worker who is provided with personal protective equipment by an employer shall
- (a) use the personal protective equipment; and
 - (b) take reasonable steps to prevent damage to the personal protective equipment.
- (5) If personal protective equipment provided to a worker becomes defective or otherwise fails to provide the protection it is intended for, the worker shall
- (a) return the personal protective equipment to the employer; and
 - (b) inform the employer of the defect or other reason why the personal protective equipment does not provide the protection that it was intended to provide.
- (6) An employer shall immediately repair or replace any personal protective equipment returned to the employer under paragraph (5)(a).

PART 9

SAFEGUARDS, STORAGE, WARNING SIGNS AND SIGNALS

138. (2) An employer shall

- (a) provide each designated signaller with, and require the signaller to use, a high visibility vest, armlets or other high visibility clothing; and
- (b) provide each designated signaller with a suitable light to signal with during hours of darkness as defined in section 161 and in conditions of poor visibility.

Risk from Vehicular Traffic

139. (1) If a worker is at risk from vehicular traffic on a highway or at any other work site, an employer shall ensure that the worker is provided with and required to use a high visibility vest, armlets or other high visibility clothing.

Code of Practice

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT BASICS

Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission
Northwest Territories and Nunavut

WSCC Emergency Reporting
24-hour Incident Reporting Line

1 800 661-0792

WSCC



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