



Joint Pool Policy on Personal Protective Equipment Usage

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for usage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for county employees having an occupational exposure or need. Particular attention should be directed to Sheriff and Detention Departments, Fire and EMS Departments, Road and Solid Waste Departments, Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance Shops, Buildings and Grounds, and Warehouse and Stockroom Departments.

PPE should not be used as a substitute for engineering controls, work practices, or administrative controls. PPE should be used in conjunction with these controls to provide employees with protection from hazards. PPE includes all clothing and other work accessories designed to create a barrier against hazards.

Each department is responsible for ensuring compliance to all applicable PPE regulatory mandates. All PPE should meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or other applicable authority requirements.

Each department should conduct a hazard assessment of the workplace to determine, if hazards are present, or likely to be present, which would require the use of PPE.

Each department should be responsible for ensuring that appropriate PPE and associated training is provided to employees for all hazards they are likely to encounter on the job.

Employees shall be responsible for wearing and maintaining PPE where there is exposure to hazardous conditions or where a need is indicated to reduce a hazard.

PPE should be stored, cleaned, and maintained as recommended by the manufacturer or regulatory mandate.

The following PPE types should be provided to affected employees; however, the list is not all-inclusive:



Hand Protection

Employees will generally use three types of hand protection: leather, latex, and rubber gloves.

- Leather gloves shall be worn as protection from the elements, rough or sharp objects or surfaces, heat sources, and during any other activity where an employee may injure the hand if not worn.
- Latex gloves shall be worn when there is a potential for exposure to biological (blood borne pathogens), or diseases from humans or animals. For those employees demonstrating sensitivity to or are allergic to latex gloves, hypoallergenic gloves or other similar alternative should be used.
- Rubber gloves shall be worn when working with hazardous chemicals. Consult product safety data sheets (SDS) for appropriate PPE, prior to exposure.

Eye and Face Protection

Eye and face protection consists of impact resistant glasses, chemical goggles, face shields, and filter lenses. Eye or face protection is necessary when employees are exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particulate, molten metal, chemicals, acids or caustic liquids, chemical gases or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation.

- Impact resistant glasses shall be worn to protect the eyes from impacts from flying fragments, objects, large chips, particle sand, dirt, or other debris. Examples include, but are not limited to chipping, grinding, machining, masonry work, woodworking, sawing, drilling, chiseling, power fastening, riveting, sanding, etc.
- Chemical goggles shall be worn to prevent exposure to chemicals. Consult product SDS prior to exposure.
- Face shields, goggles, and safety glasses shall be worn to prevent exposure to heat sources and high temperatures, hot sparks, splash from molten metals, optical radiation, and to protect the face from flying debris. Examples include, but not limited to furnace operations, welding, cutting, torch brazing, torch soldering, etc.
- Filter lenses that possess a shade number appropriate for the work performed shall be used to protect employees engaged in welding or other operations likely to cause light radiation injuries.



Foot Protection

Protective footwear (metatarsal guards or shoes/boots) shall be sturdy and possess an impact-resistant toe. Protective footwear shall be worn if the work being performed may result in an injury from falling, rolling, or sharp objects, or objects piercing the sole. Examples include, but not limited to employees assigned to the Road Department, Landfill, Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance Shops, or Buildings and Grounds Maintenance.

Head Protection

Head protection is designed to prevent head injuries normally caused by falling, thrown, or flying objects.

- Head protection shall be worn at building construction, road construction and maintenance projects, landfill operations, etc.
- Shop mechanics shall wear “bump caps”. Field mechanics shall wear hard hats because of increased exposures in the field.
- Employees working near electrical conductors, which could contact the head, shall wear helmets designed to reduce possible electrical shock hazards.

Hearing Protection

Exposure to high noise levels can cause hearing loss or impairment. There is no cure for noise-induced hearing loss; prevention of excessive noise is the only method of avoiding hearing damage. Noise levels are measured in units of decibels (dB). Appropriate hearing protection includes earplugs, ear wool, ear canals, and earmuffs.

- Protection against the effects of noise exposure must be provided when it is not feasible to reduce noise levels or when durations of exposure exceed the following limits:

<u>Total Hours of Exposure/Day</u>	<u>dB A Sound Level</u>
8	90
6	92
4	95
3	97
2	100
1.5	102
1	105



.5	110
.25 or less	115

Respiratory Protection

The use of respiratory protective devices is normally restricted to periods of intermittent hazardous exposures or when such exposures are not practically controlled by other methods.

- Employees expected to use respirators should have training in their proper use, maintenance, limitations, and selection.
- Respiratory protective devices shall be used when handling or working with hazardous chemicals, working around excessive dust or particulate, or in oxygen deficient atmospheres. Consult product SDS for appropriate respirator type prior to exposure. Examples include, but are not limited to when handling lime and cement, spray painting, disbursement of weed and insect chemicals, working with chemical cleaning agents or solvents, in clandestine labs, etc.

Ballistic Protection

Typically, 15 to 20% of officers slain each year are killed with their own weapon; therefore, the protection level of the vest should be adequate to protect employees from their own service weapon.

- Ballistic vests (body armor) shall be worn by all uniformed law enforcement officers responding to routine or special calls for service, or when exposed to direct public contact in an enforcement capacity. Non-uniformed enforcement personnel should wear body armor when serving arrest or search warrants or any other time the risk of gunfire is likely.

Reflective Safety Vest

Reflective (day-glow) safety vests are designed to illuminate and/or identify employees and shall be worn when working on or adjacent to the street, highway, or in congested traffic areas.

- Law Enforcement personnel should not wear reflective vests if wearing the garment will compromise officer safety.

Other Protection

Some specialized positions, by the nature of their work, may occasionally require use of other PPE. PPE should be provided and used as applicable to industry standards and manufacturer guidelines.



Passed by unanimous consent of the NMCA Multi-Line Pool Board of Directors on April 29, 1992.

Passed by unanimous consent of the New Mexico Counties Workers' Compensation Fund Board of Directors on April 29, 1992.

Revisions approved by the NMCA Multi-Line Pool Board of Directors on December 3, 2003.

Revisions approved by the NMCA Workers' Compensation Pool Board of Directors of December 3, 2003.

Revised/passed by unanimous consent of the NMCA Multi-Line Pool Board of Directors on December 16, 2015.

Revised/passed by unanimous consent of the NMCA Workers' Compensation Fund Board of Directors on December 17, 2015.

Effective January 1, 2016 this is a stand-alone policy and changes to the policy do not need to be reviewed or approved by the Pool Boards of Directors.