

OSHA Issues New Enforcement Directive On Personal Protective Equipment

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The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently issued a new directive entitled *Enforcement Guidance for Personal Protective Equipment in General Industry* (CPL 02-01-050). The directive gives OSHA compliance officers guidance on determining whether employers are in violation of general industry personal protective equipment (PPE) standards.

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The PPE standards, 29 CFR 1910.132 through 29 CFR 1910.138, establish an employer's obligation to provide PPE to employees. In particular, 29 CFR 1910.132(a) states: "Protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields and barriers, shall be provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition wherever it is necessary by reason of hazards of processes or environment, chemical hazards, radiological hazards, or mechanical irritants encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or impairment in the function of any part of the body through absorption, inhalation or physical contact."

The new directive specifies what PPE employers must provide at no cost, such as goggles, non-prescriptive eye protection, rubber sleeves, respirators and personal fall protection. While the new directive provides that employers must pay for replacement equipment that is damaged, they are not required to pay for equipment upgrades requested by an employee that go beyond minimum OSHA standards or for lost equipment.

TOPICS

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