



Employer-paid PPE:

What's covered under the new rule?

You may or may not follow OSHA Standards too closely, but, on Nov. 15, 2007, OSHA finally issued its **final rule on employer payment for personal protective equipment (PPE)**. Under the rule, all required PPE, with a few exceptions, must be provided at **no cost** to the employee. Employers must implement the PPE payment requirements no later than May 15, 2008.

How you actually pay for the PPE is not specified in the rule. Many employers use allowances or reimbursement systems, or maintain a stock of PPE and hand it out to their employees. All these methods are acceptable, as long as the employee receives the PPE at no cost.

Employers do NOT have to pay for:

- Non-specialty safety-toe protective footwear (e.g., steel-toe shoes/ boots)
- Non-specialty prescription safety eyewear
- Sunglasses/sunscreen
- Sturdy work shoes
- Lineman's boots
- Ordinary cold weather gear (coats, parkas, cold weather gloves, winter boots)
- Logging boots required under Sec. 1910.266(d)(1)(v)
- Ordinary rain gear
- Back belts
- Long sleeve shirts
- Long pants
- Dust mask/respirators used under the voluntary use provisions in Sec.1910.134.

Employers DO have to pay for:

- Foot protection
- Special boots for longshoremen working logs
- Rubber boots with steel toes
- Shoe covers--toe caps and metatarsal guards
- Non-prescription eye protection
- Prescription eyewear inserts/lenses for full face respirators
- Prescription eyewear inserts/lenses for welding and diving helmets
- Goggles
- Face shields
- Laser safety goggles
- Fire fighting PPE (helmet, gloves, boots, proximity suits, full gear)
- Hard hats
- Hearing protection
- Welding PPE
- Items used in medical/laboratory settings to protect from exposure to infectious agents (aprons, lab coats, goggles, disposable gloves, shoe covers, etc).
- Non-specialty gloves: Payment is required if they are PPE, i.e. for protection from dermatitis or severe cuts/abrasions. Payment is not required if they are only for keeping clean or for cold weather (with no safety or health consideration).
- Rubber sleeves
- Aluminized gloves
- Chemical resistant gloves/aprons/clothing
- Barrier creams (unless used solely for weather-related protection)
- Rubber insulating gloves
- Mesh cut proof gloves, mesh, or leather aprons