

Avoiding work-related eye injuries

Factsheet for employers

Eye injury can rob an employee not only of their sight, but also their independence and ability to work. A single serious eye injury can leave a person disabled for life – but can be easily prevented.

What types of eye injuries can occur?

The most serious injuries are caused by:

- foreign objects
- chemicals
- cutting objects
- blunt trauma

but dust, concrete shards, metal shavings, wire, caustic fluids are also harmful.

If you don't take adequate precautions, **it can cost you**: in production time, insurance premiums, fines and compensation claims.

What do I need to do to minimise risk?

Employers MUST:

- assess workplace hazards
- implement control measures to reduce risks of eye injury
- provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including eye protection, for workers.

As an employer, you are legally required to ensure that your employees are equipped with the appropriate protective eyewear. For more information on appropriate protective eyewear go to www.hse.gov.uk and search for "eye protection".

Eye protection should comply with British Standards.

Remember – eye protection is a LAST RESORT and eye hazards should be adequately controlled in other ways.

Top tips to reduce eye injuries at work

- Provide a safe working environment – implement controls to minimise eye hazards (eg works screens, machine guards or engineering controls).
- Ensure availability of protective eyewear appropriate for the job (eg impact, heat, chemicals, dust and radiation), that it meets appropriate standards and that it fits properly and is easy to use.
- Replace any damaged or broken eyewear.
- Focus on new employees and visitors.
- Put warning signs like the poster for employees in areas at risk.
- Provide appropriate first aid and/or eyewash/drench facilities on site.
- Remind employees about proper use and limitations of eyewear and document workforce education/training.
- Encourage a culture of safety awareness by supporting the program and set an example!
- Encourage regular eye examinations.
- Get feedback from staff – is it working?

