

The clothes we choose to wear to work can either be a part of our protective gear or can help cause an accident. Be sure that your team is aware of the clothing requirements for various on-the-job activities. Caution them that clothing standards may vary dependent upon:

- Type of weather
- Type of work to be accomplished
- Type of work environment

As an example, heavy gloves are typically worn if a worker is handling uneven or rough equipment, gear, or stock. Be that as it may, an employee was hurt when the finger of his glove was snagged and wound around a drill bit.

**Footwear –** Work footwear should have thick soles with plenty of ankle support. Never wear footwear that is tattered or excessively worn.

Good, safe footwear is available with skid-resistant soles, chemical-resistant soles, steel toes, flexible steel insoles to protect from puncture, waterproofing, and conduction-proof materials.

With their 15-inch sides, engineer boots are designed to protect ankles from things such as climbing straps, brush, or debris.

**Pants –** Pants should have an appropriate-length inseam and not be excessively lengthy. Workers can trip over the dragging material while descending a ladder or while stepping backward.

Don't allow unhemmed or "cutoff" pants because trailing threads also cause a trip hazard. Pants should be constructed of a sturdy, flame-retardant fabric.

**Shirts –** Shirts are designed to protect your upper body from the sun, work by-products such as splattered paint or dirt, or abrasions.

Do not allow any of your team to go without a shirt. It is more important to be protected than to work on a tan.

**Soiled clothing hazards –** Remind the team to keep clothing clean as much as possible. Clothes that are saturated with dirt or oil can be irritating to the skin, while oil- or grease-soaked clothes can easily catch fire.

**Jewelry or accessories –** Tell your team not to wear jewelry or accessories. One worker had his finger pulled right off when he fell and caught his ring on machinery.

# WORK APPAREL

Bracelets, dangling necklaces, wallet chains, and even watches can get caught and cause a fall or an injury. If a watch must be worn, be sure that it is fastened with Velcro or another easily-detachable material.

Cold weather – Wear sufficient clothing when the weather is cold. Because layers of clothing help trap body heat, two light layers protect more than a single heavy layer.

Wool insulates better than cotton, and both are better than nylon because they wick away moisture and help keep you from getting chilled. Nylon is not flame-retardant!

Extras – Remind your team that each job has safety equipment that should be worn. Hard hats, safety goggles, leather gloves, hearing protection, respirators, or even leather sleeves may be required for their own safety.

Ask if they have witnessed a professional hockey player or other sports player in a game without protective gear. Tell them that they are professionals, too, and should wear appropriate clothing.

## PUT IT UNDER A SPOTLIGHT WITH THIS:

Model the proper apparel by wearing it yourself. This sets a good example for your team.

## START THE CONVERSATION:

- What type of clothing or protective gear does this job require?
- What types of gloves need to be worn? Is there an instance where they should not be worn?
- Can anyone recall a serious accident that occurred because of incorrect clothing?



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