Construction PPE Must Properly Fit

Effective January 13, 2025, federal OSHA's construction PPE rule explicitly requires employers to select personal protective equipment that properly fits each affected employee. Under 29 CFR 1926.95(c), PPE must also be of safe design and construction for the work. A worker needs equipment that fits their body and the hazard they face.

Why fit matters

Poorly fitting PPE may not provide the intended protection and can interfere with work. A loose fall protection harness may not position its straps and attachment point correctly. Eye protection that leaves gaps may expose the eyes. A hard hat that slips can move out of position, while oversized gloves can reduce dexterity around tools. These are examples; follow the applicable equipment standard and manufacturer's fitting instructions.

What construction employers should do

Check each worker's fit. Have the worker wear and adjust the actual equipment selected for the task. Confirm that it stays in place and does not create another hazard.

Offer suitable options. Keep access to different sizes or designs when one model cannot properly fit everyone. Replace equipment that cannot be adjusted to fit an affected worker.

Explain use and adjustment. Train workers on how to wear, adjust, inspect, and report problems with the PPE they use, as applicable to the equipment and task.

Include fit in field checks. Supervisors should look beyond whether PPE is present and verify that it is appropriate, fitted, and worn as intended.

A one-size-fits-all purchase may be convenient, but it does not satisfy the requirement when the equipment does not properly fit a worker. Encourage employees to speak up when PPE is too large, too small, unstable, or uncomfortable enough to interfere with safe use.

KARM Safety Solutions offers safety training, workplace inspections, and safety program support. Contact KARM to discuss PPE selection and use on your jobsites.

Sources: OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.95(c); Personal Protective Equipment in Construction (effective January 13, 2025).