

Preventing Injuries to the Eyes and Ears in Landscaping

This card provides employers in the landscaping industry with a general overview of how to prevent injuries to employees' eyes and ears.

- As a company policy, require all employees to use both eye and hearing protectors on all jobs sites. Publish company policy for violations of eye and hearing protection equipment use in your office, break room, garage and other areas where your employees frequent. Employees must know the result of not complying with safety policies.
- Company policy should require eye and ear protection to be used in the following work areas: trimming, chain saw and power cutter operation, mowing, tilling and brush cutting, all motorized equipment operation, shop technician work place and job sites where technicians work, especially welding and grinding operations.
- Track and log every eye and hearing issue from employee start date throughout the employment cycle. This helps protect the employee from ongoing issues and allows for corrective action or reassignment.
- Require crew leaders to enforce the use of eye and hearing protection. Educate workers that hearing loss is irreversible.
- Keep eye and hearing protection devices readily available and prominently positioned in gathering and job assignment areas. Ensure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) properly fits each employee. Respirator fit testing should be conducted upon initial assignment and annually thereafter.
- Show employees how to properly maintain and store their PPE, as well as how to inspect PPE for wear, tear, and malfunctions, and how to get it replaced. Let them know that PPE won't work if it's broken, in disrepair, or not cared for properly.
- Don't skimp on the quality of eye and hearing protection items. Protective eye and face protection devices must comply with ANSI Z87.1 consensus standards. Good is okay, but high quality is better and might be used more frequently by employees.
- Identify work areas where airborne debris is created and take additional precautions such as vacuums and air movers to eliminate concentration of airborne particles.
- For chemical applications, train and promote safe practices including higher level eye protectors to reduce chemical eye contact.
- Rotate workers from tasks that could be harmful to their hearing to those that aren't or have the entire crew alternate between such tasks.
- Spot-check job sites often and consistently follow up with progressive disciplinary documentation and action.
- Offer an annual hearing and eye exam to each employee.

