

April 21, 1997

Chuck Carey, Safety Specialist
A dec
P. O. Box 111
Newberg, Oregon 97132-0111

Dear Mr. Carey:

This letter is in response to your letter of March 31, 1997, in which you asked OR-OSHA to respond to the question of who is required to use eye protection while in your machine shops, and whether prescriptive lenses meet the requirements of adequate eye protection.

OR-OSHA's position is that all covered workers, including corporate officers, managers, supervisors, employees, and anyone else covered by the Oregon Safe Employment Act, such as employees of other companies who are visitors at your location, must use adequate eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, acids or caustic liquids, chemical gases or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation. Exposure is defined as anytime someone is close enough to the hazard that it is reasonably predicable that injury could occur. In the case of hazards created by flying particles, normally anyone within 15 feet of the source of the hazard is considered to be at risk, though this distance certainly could increase depending on the source of hazard. Since hazard evaluation usually involves several different factors which are susceptible to change, most companies find it easier to manage, and most effective, just to require everyone to wear adequate eye or face protection from the time they enter the hazardous area until they leave. When workers see everyone, including top management, using adequate eye protection it edifies the company's whole safety program and makes enforcement of company policies easier.

In order for eye protection to be adequate, it must comply with the ANSI standard for eye and face protection in effect at the time of purchase. This means that normal prescription glasses meant for everyday use do not meet the requirements for industrial strength safety glasses, and thus, are not adequate protection for use in your machine shop. Industrial strength safety glasses are not only equipped with lenses that are capable of withstanding strong forces exerted against them, flying projectiles, and other hazards, but their frames are designed to absorb energy and break before embedding into the head. When used to protect against flying objects, safety glasses must incorporate the use of side shields. In order to ease the burden on management and eliminate any confusion and possible exposure, permanently attached side shields are recommended.

For further information contact Mike Mitchell at 378-3272. You are also invited to see the OR-

OSHA pages on the Internet at www.cbs.state.or.us/external/osha/index.html.

Sincerely,

Marilyn K. Schuster, Manager
Standards & Technical Resources Section
Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Division

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