



Learning Guide: Addressing PPE Fatigue

How to Encourage Consistent Use of High-Visibility Gear





Addressing PPE Fatigue

Safety gear, such as high visibility apparel, respirators, hearing protection and safety goggles, is designed to keep workers safe, but it only works if workers use it properly. When workers neglect to wear personal protective equipment or fail to follow safety guidelines, they are at risk of injury or even death. Some workers may have great intentions of following safety guidelines consistently, but may experience PPE fatigue that hinders their efforts. PPE fatigue occurs when workers face mental, physical or emotional exhaustion from prolonged or repeated use of PPE.

PPE fatigue can occur for multiple reasons. Let's talk about four common causes of PPE fatigue, with suggestions of how to help employees overcome them.

1

Physical Discomfort

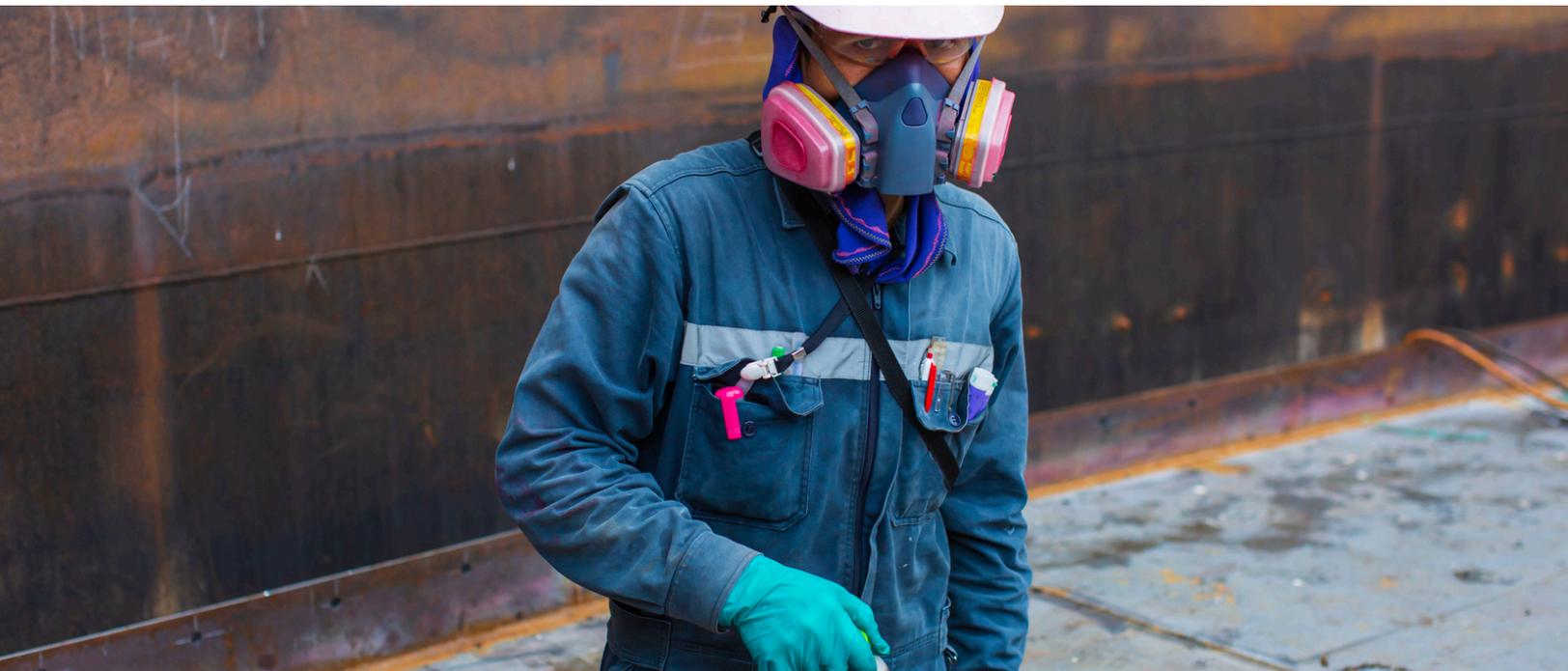
The more uncomfortable safety gear is, the less likely employees are to wear it consistently. Increase employee comfort and compliance by investing in high-quality, properly fitting hi-visibility apparel. Prioritize breathable fabrics, moisture-wicking capabilities, cooling textiles and adjustability features, like side vents, gussets or elasticized waists, for a more custom-fit. Look for a wide range of sizes and fits, including gender-specific styles, to accommodate the unique needs of each individual. Pay close attention to layering, especially with insulated or cold-weather garments, as excessive bulk or poor compatibility between layers can restrict movement and lead to fatigue. Look for ergonomic designs and streamlined insulation that provide warmth without added weight. Encourage feedback from employees to continuously improve PPE design and comfort.



2

Employee Perception Issues

Employees may underestimate the importance of PPE or assume it's unnecessary for certain tasks. The key is combining education, communication and engagement to help shift those perceptions. Involving workers in the selection process, through wear trials and field testing programs, can make a significant difference. When employees experience first-hand how comfortable, well-fitting workwear can enhance mobility and confidence, they're far more likely to wear it consistently. Reinforce these efforts by framing PPE not as just protection from injury, but as an investment in every worker's long-term well-being and that of their families.



3

Lack of Education

Even when workers want to comply, gaps in training can lead to misuse or misunderstanding of PPE requirements. Establishing a strong safety culture starts with consistent, engaging education. Ritz Safety supports organizations in this effort by helping safety leaders identify the right PPE for specific hazards, train teams on proper use and reinforce compliance through continuous learning tools.



4

Lack of Accountability

Some workers may become lax about PPE when accountability is low or leadership engagement is inconsistent. Supervisors and managers play a crucial role by modeling safe behavior, setting expectations and addressing noncompliance early. Partnering with Ritz Safety experts and safety specialists can help strengthen these programs. Our experts work directly with companies to evaluate real-world conditions, identify compliance gaps and recommend tailored PPE solutions that improve consistency, comfort and long-term safety outcomes.



Building a Culture That Prioritizes Protection

PPE fatigue is a serious threat to worker safety. Even with the best policies and training, PPE programs rely heavily on worker cooperation. If employees resist wearing PPE due to discomfort, fatigue or lack of understanding, enforcement becomes limited in practice. Highlighting this point emphasizes the shared responsibility between employers and employees. Through high-quality safety gear, employee engagement, and education, employers can build a culture of safety to ensure employees fully understand the critical role of safety apparel in protecting themselves and their colleagues.

