



Shielding eyes and face from hazards, pathogens

OSHA's Standard Precautions are the minimum infection prevention practices that apply to all patient care, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status of the patient, in any setting where healthcare is delivered. As an element of Standard Precautions, the use of personal protective equipment – including masks and eyewear – is essential for the safety of all dental healthcare personnel.

As part of Standard 1910.1030 for bloodborne pathogens, OSHA states when there is occupational exposure, the employer shall provide, at no cost to the employee, appropriate personal protective equipment such as, but not limited to, gloves, gowns, laboratory coats, face shields or masks and eye protection, and mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, pocket masks or other ventilation devices.

OSHA requirement 1910.1030(d)(3)(x) outlines the following for masks, eye protection and face masks: Masks in combination with eye protection devices, such as goggles or glasses with solid side shields, or chin-length face shields, shall be worn whenever splashes, spray, spatter or droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials may be generated and eye, nose or mouth contamination can be reasonably anticipated.

In addition to eye protection used to protect against bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials, OSHA Standard 1910.133 further outlines the following requirements for eye and face protection:

- **1910.133(a)(1)** – The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses appropriate 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.
- **1910.133(a)(2)** – The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses eye protection that provides side protection when there is a hazard from flying objects. Detachable side protectors (e.g., clip-on or slide-on side shields) meeting the pertinent requirements of this section are acceptable.
- **1910.133(a)(3)** – The employer shall ensure that each affected employee who wears prescription lenses while engaged in operations that involve eye hazards wears eye protection that incorporates the prescription in its design or wears eye protection that can be worn over the prescription lenses without disturbing the proper position of the prescription lenses or the protective lenses.



- **1910.133(a)(4)** – Eye and face PPE shall be distinctly marked to facilitate identification of the manufacturer.
- **1910.133(a)(5)** – The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses equipment with filter lenses that have a shade number appropriate for the work being performed for protection from injurious light radiation.

For a list of appropriate shade numbers for various operations, visit [OSHA.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.133](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.133).

OSHA's mission is to assure that workers have safe and healthful working conditions and does this by setting and enforcing standards. For information regarding OSHA requirements for a practice, visit [OSHA.gov](https://www.osha.gov).

Additional Resources

Explore more OSHA compliance resources at [AAOMSstore.com](https://www.aaomsstore.com), including *Model Medical Practice OSHA Exposure Control Compliance Plan and Training* and the OSHA Exposure Control Training Module USB drive.

A recording of the 2024 webinar, *Eye Safety in the OMS Setting: Best Practices to Reduce Ocular Exposures and Injuries*, also is available at [AAOMS.org/CEonline](https://www.aaoms.org/CEonline). ■

The content of this article is provided for informational purposes and not intended as legal advice or as replacing consultation with an attorney.