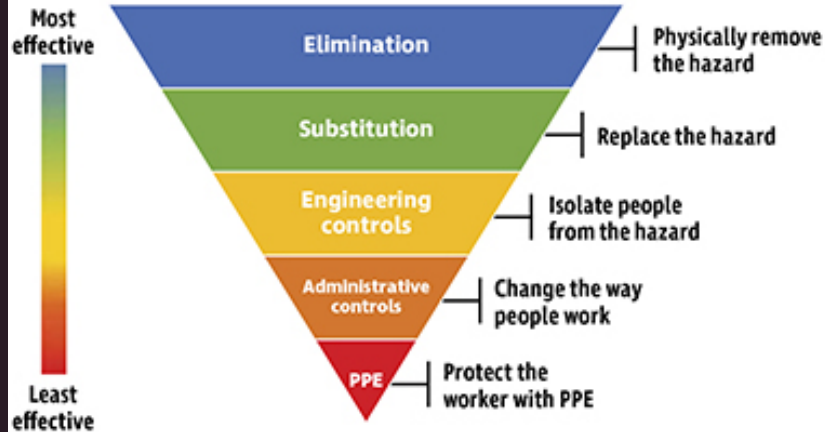


# HIERARCHY OF CONTROL AND THE ROLE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

### INTRODUCTION

Ensuring workplace safety is paramount in any organisation. The hierarchy of control is a system used globally to minimize or eliminate exposure to hazards. Understanding this hierarchy is essential for creating a safe work environment. Alongside these controls, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) plays a critical role. This newsletter delves into the hierarchy of control and the proper use of PPE.

### HIERARCHY OF CONTROL



Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

### WHAT IS THE HIERARCHY OF CONTROL?

The hierarchy of control is a method of identifying and ranking safeguards to protect workers from hazards. It is typically represented as a pyramid, with the most effective controls at the top and the least effective at the bottom. There are five (5) levels in the hierarchy of Control;

#### Elimination

This is the most effective method. It involves physically removing the hazard from the workplace. **Example:** Ending the use of a hazardous material.

#### Substitution

This is the changing out of a material or process to reduce the hazard. **Example:** Switching to a less hazardous material.

#### Engineering Controls

These controls focus on isolating people from the hazard. **Example:** Use of Fume hood with hazardous chemicals.

#### Administrative Controls

These involve changing the way people work. **Example:** employ a buddy system with using hazardous chemicals.

#### PPE

This includes clothing and devices to protect workers. PPE needs constant effort and attention (including proper use and training) from workers. **Example:** Use of chemical respirators with hazardous chemicals.

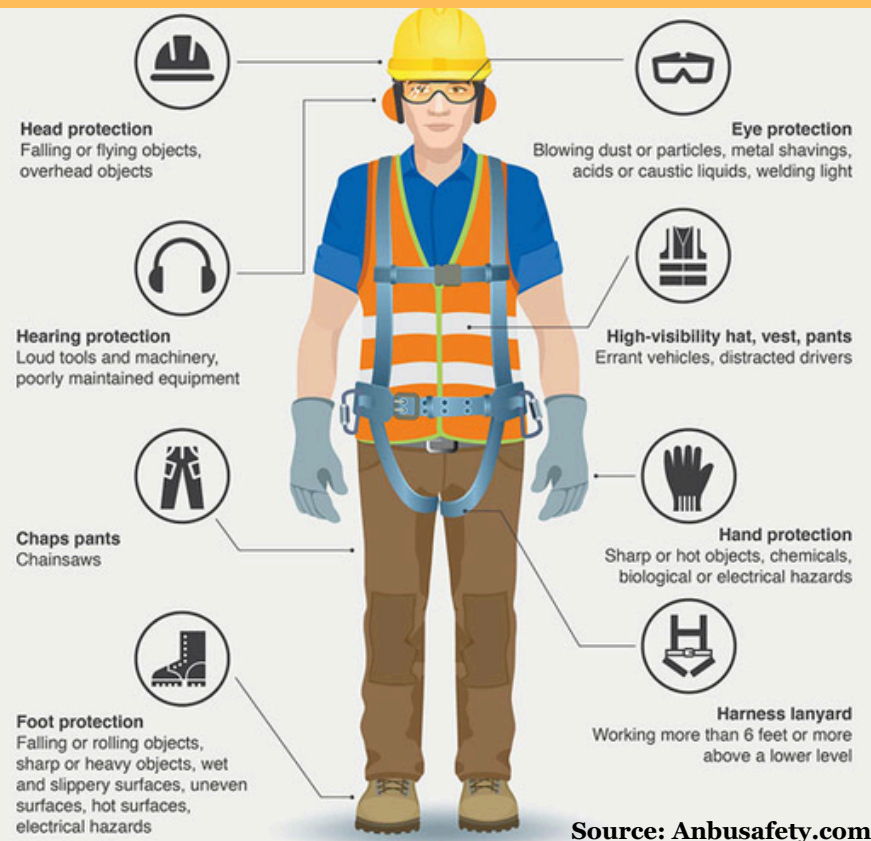
# HIERARCHY OF CONTROL AND THE ROLE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

## THE ROLE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

### WHAT IS PPE?

**Personal protective equipment**, commonly referred to as "**PPE**", is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. These injuries and illnesses may result from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. Personal protective equipment may include items such as gloves, safety glasses and shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, or coveralls, vests and full body suits.

### EXAMPLES OF PPE



While PPE is the last line of defense in the hierarchy of control, it is essential when higher-level controls are insufficient. Proper selection, use, and maintenance are vital for effectiveness.

- **Selection:** Choose PPE based on specific hazards. For example, use chemical-resistant gloves for hazardous substances and hard hats for construction sites.
- **Use:** Train employees on correct usage, including when and how to wear PPE and its limitations.
- **Maintenance:** Regularly inspect and maintain PPE. Replace damaged or worn-out equipment to ensure protection.

### Integrating PPE with Other Controls

Although PPE is essential, it should never be the sole method of protection. Combining PPE with other controls in the hierarchy creates a robust safety system. For example, in a laboratory handling hazardous chemicals, using PPE like gloves and goggles should be complemented with proper ventilation systems (engineering control) and safety training (administrative control).