

Hi-Visibility Ratings Explained: ANSI 107 Classes and When Each Is Required

Work 'n More Safety Guide | Updated 2025 | worknmore.com

Hi-vis apparel is one of the most commonly required pieces of PPE on job sites, loading docks, and anywhere workers share space with vehicle traffic — but the rating system confuses a lot of buyers. Walk into any workwear store and you'll see Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 labels, Type O, R, and P designations, and ANSI/ISEA 107 stamped across the tag. What does it actually mean, and which one do you need?

This guide breaks down the ANSI/ISEA 107 standard in plain language — for workers trying to buy the right gear for their job, and for employers trying to understand what their site or facility legally requires.

ANSI/ISEA 107 is the American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Accessories. It defines minimum performance requirements for background material, retroreflective tape, and combined-performance classes. OSHA references this standard when requiring hi-vis PPE — meeting ANSI 107 is how you demonstrate compliance.

The Three Performance Classes

The class rating is the most important number on your hi-vis label. It tells you the minimum visibility performance of the garment — specifically, how much background fluorescent material and retroreflective tape it contains, and how it performs in both daylight and low-light conditions.

Class	Who It's For	Typical Environments	Required By OSHA?
Class 1	Workers in low-traffic areas with adequate separation from vehicle traffic	Off-road utility work, parking facilities, warehouse interiors with limited forklift traffic, some sidewalk work	Situation-dependent. Some facilities and GCs require Class 2 as a minimum across the board regardless of traffic level. Verify with your site safety program.
Class 2	Workers near vehicle traffic where drivers have adequate time to see and react	Construction sites, highway work zones under 50 mph, warehouse and distribution with active forklift traffic, loading docks, roadway-adjacent landscaping or jobsite/customer requirements.	Yes — required by OSHA and MUTCD for most roadway construction and any work area with powered industrial truck traffic. The most commonly required class.
Class 3	Workers in high-speed traffic environments where maximum	Highway work zones over 50 mph, active roadway flagging,	Yes — required for high-speed roadway work zones and flaggers under MUTCD. Some

visibility at distance is required

nighttime road work, emergency responders

state DOT standards mandate Class 3 for all highway work regardless of speed.

What the Type Designation Means

In addition to the class rating, ANSI 107 assigns a Type designation that describes the intended use environment. You'll see this on the label alongside the class.

Type O — Off-Road

Designed for workers not exposed to public roadway traffic. Covers parking facilities, warehouse interiors, off-road construction, and similar environments. Type O garments can be Class 1, 2, or 3, but are not intended for use in active roadway work zones.

Type R — Roadway and Temporary Traffic Control

The most common type for construction and roadway work. Required by MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) for workers in temporary traffic control zones on public roads. Type R garments are Class 2 or Class 3. If your workers are in a road construction zone, Type R is the correct designation — not just any Class 2 garment.

Type P — Public Safety

Designed for law enforcement, fire, and emergency response personnel. Includes design features specific to public safety applications. Not typically relevant for construction, warehouse, or industrial workers.

Practical takeaway: For construction and roadway work, you need Type R. For warehouse and off-road environments, Type O is acceptable — though many employers standardize on Type R throughout their operations to keep it simple.

When OSHA Requires Hi-Vis — and What Class

OSHA doesn't have a single blanket hi-vis regulation — the requirement depends on the type of work and the applicable standard. Here's where hi-vis is required and what class applies.

Construction — 29 CFR 1926

OSHA's construction standards require workers in highway rights-of-way to wear high-visibility apparel meeting ANSI/ISEA 107 Class 2 or 3 as the minimum, based on the MUTCD. The specific class depends on traffic speed and volume. Most construction GCs require Class 2 as a blanket minimum across the entire site, regardless of whether all workers are in the roadway.

General industry / warehouse — 29 CFR 1910

OSHA's general industry standards don't specify a hi-vis class directly, but 29 CFR 1910.178 requires that pedestrians in powered industrial truck (forklift) operating areas be protected and identifiable. Most safety professionals interpret this as requiring ANSI Class 2 hi-vis in any area where forklifts operate. Your facility's written hazard assessment should specify the class required.

Flaggers and traffic control — MUTCD

Flaggers on public roads must wear Class 2 hi-vis at a minimum. Class 3 is required when flagging on roads with speeds above 50 mph or in low-visibility conditions. This is a FHWA/MUTCD requirement incorporated by OSHA reference — not optional.

State and local requirements

Several states have hi-vis requirements that exceed federal OSHA standards. Washington State L&I follows federal OSHA standards as a baseline but GCs and facility operators frequently impose stricter requirements. Always confirm what your specific project or facility requires — the most stringent requirement that applies to your situation is the one you follow.

OSHA's January 2025 PPE fit rule requires that hi-vis apparel properly fit each employee — not just that it's provided. A vest that's so oversized it becomes a snag hazard no longer satisfies the standard. See our full OSHA PPE Fit Rule guide at worknmore.com for details.

Choosing the Right Garment Type

Once you know what class you need, the next decision is what form of garment works for your job and conditions. The same Class 2 rating can come in a vest, a hoodie, a jacket, or a full rain suit — and the right choice depends on the season, the work, and what you're already wearing.

Garment Type	Class Available	Best For
Vest	Class 1, 2, or 3	Warm weather, layering over existing outer garments. Most economical option.
T-Shirt / Polo	Class 1 or 2	Active summer work where a vest is too hot. Provides integrated hi-vis without layering.
Hoodie / Sweatshirt	Class 2 or 3	Fall and winter work. Replaces the vest-over-jacket combination. Carhartt, Portwest and Radians carry Class 2 hoodies.
Jacket / Parka	Class 2 or 3	Cold and wet conditions. Insulated options eliminate the need for a separate coat. Key for PNW winters.
Rain Gear (jacket + bibs)	Class 2 or 3	All-day wet conditions. Grundéns, Helly Hansen Workwear, Radians and Portwest carry rated rain gear.
Coveralls	Class 2 or 3	Industrial environments where full-body coverage is needed. FR-rated hi-vis coveralls available for dual-hazard environments.
Pants / Bibs	Class E (lower body)	Class E lower-body garments combined with Class 2 upper body = Class 3 equivalent in some standards. Verify with your site requirement.

Work 'n More carries hi-vis apparel from Carhartt, Helly Hansen Workwear, Grundéns, Portwest, Radians, Majestic, and PIP — vests through insulated parkas, Class 1 through Class 3. Shop in-store or at [worknmore.com](https://www.worknmore.com).

Layering and Hi-Vis: Getting It Right

One of the most common hi-vis mistakes on job sites is wearing the hi-vis garment under an outer layer. If your hi-vis vest is under your jacket, you are not compliant — the visibility performance is only provided by the outermost garment.

The right approach in cold weather

In cooler months, the solution is to wear a hi-vis outer layer, not to layer a non-hi-vis jacket over a hi-vis vest. A Class 2 hi-vis hoodie or insulated jacket worn as the outermost layer satisfies the requirement while keeping you warm. This is a better system than a vest over a jacket — more comfortable, less bulk, and clearly compliant.

Rain gear over hi-vis

The same principle applies to rain gear. If you're pulling on a non-hi-vis rain jacket over a hi-vis layer, you've lost your compliance. Invest in hi-vis rated rain gear if your work involves both wet conditions and traffic or equipment exposure. Grundéns, Helly Hansen Workwear, and Portwest make ANSI-rated rain gear for exactly this situation.

Quick rule: Whatever is on the outside is what counts. Your outermost layer must be the hi-vis garment. There are no exceptions to this under ANSI 107 or OSHA.

Reading the Label: What to Look For

Every compliant hi-vis garment is required to carry a sewn-in label with specific information. Here's how to read it.

What should be on the label

ANSI/ISEA 107 followed by the edition year (e.g., ANSI/ISEA 107-2020). The Type designation (O, R, or P). The Class (1, 2, or 3). The manufacturer name and care instructions. If any of these are missing, the garment is not certified compliant regardless of what the packaging says.

What the label doesn't tell you

The label tells you the garment was compliant when manufactured. It doesn't tell you whether it's still compliant after washing and use. Retroreflective tape and fluorescent background material both degrade over time — a faded, worn hi-vis vest may still carry its original label while no longer meeting performance requirements. Condition matters as much as the label.

Inspection, Care, and Replacement

Hi-vis apparel has a service life. Unlike a hard hat that you replace after an impact, hi-vis gear degrades gradually through washing, UV exposure, and physical wear. Knowing when to replace it is as important as knowing what to buy.

Item	Care Instruction	Replace When
Hi-vis vest	Machine wash cold, inside out. No bleach. No fabric softener.	Reflective tape cracks, peels, or loses retroreflectivity. Background material fades significantly. After approximately 25–40 wash cycles.
Hi-vis jacket / hoodie	Follow care label. Most tolerate machine wash cold. Tumble dry low.	Same as vest — reflective tape integrity and background color brightness are the key indicators.
Hi-vis rain gear	Hand wash or machine wash gentle. Re-proof DWR coating seasonally.	When waterproofing fails and can't be restored with re-proofing treatment, or when hi-vis ratings are compromised.
FR hi-vis garments	Wash separately. No bleach, no fabric softener — both degrade FR rating. Follow NFPA 2112 care label exactly.	When FR rating is compromised — check for burns, holes, or damage that exposes the wearer. FR and hi-vis ratings degrade independently.

The retroreflective tape test

Retroreflective tape is the silver/gray striping that reflects headlights and flashlights back toward the light source. To test it: in a dark area, shine a flashlight or phone light at the tape from across the room. If it reflects brightly back at you, it's still performing. If it looks dull or barely reflects, it's past its service life and the garment may need to be replaced.

Background material

The fluorescent orange, yellow-green or red background material provides daytime visibility. Hold the garment next to a new garment of the same color. If the used garment looks noticeably faded, washed out, or gray compared to the new one, it no longer provides the fluorescent performance required by ANSI 107.

Work 'n More stocks replacement hi-vis vests, jackets, and rain gear year-round. If your crew's gear is overdue for replacement, it's worth doing a sweep. Browse current inventory at [worknmore.com](https://www.worknmore.com) or stop into any location.

For Employers: Setting a Facility Hi-Vis Standard

The simplest approach to hi-vis compliance as an employer is to standardize on Class 2 throughout your facility or job site — and require that it be the outermost layer at all times in designated areas. This eliminates judgment calls, simplifies enforcement, and ensures you're covered across the range of environments your workers move through.

Document your hi-vis requirement in your written PPE program, conduct a hazard assessment that supports the class you've selected, and include hi-vis inspection and replacement in your periodic

safety reviews. Under OSHA's 2025 fit rule, also confirm that hi-vis garments are properly sized for each worker — not issued from a one-size bin.

Work 'n More business accounts make it easy to standardize and reorder hi-vis gear across a crew. Set up an account at worknmore.com or at any of our four Washington locations.

Shop Hi-Visibility Apparel at Work 'n More

Work 'n More carries one of the largest hi-vis selections in the Pacific Northwest — Class 1 through Class 3, vests through insulated parkas, and hi-vis rain gear rated for all-day wet conditions. We stock brands built for real job site use: Carhartt, Helly Hansen Workwear, Grundéns, Portwest, Radians, Majestic, PIP and more.

If you're not sure what class or type your job requires, come in and ask. Our associates know the standards and can help you find the right garment for your specific environment.

Shop hi-vis apparel or set up a business account: worknmore.com

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