

# What to Wear on a Construction Site: A Complete Workwear Guide

Work 'n More Buying Guide | Updated 2025 | [worknmore.com](https://worknmore.com)

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Construction sites are unforgiving environments. The gear you wear affects your safety, your comfort at the end of a long day, and how long your equipment lasts before it needs replacing. Whether you're outfitting yourself for a new job or a foreman building out a crew, this guide covers what you actually need on a general construction site — and what to look for when you're buying.

We've organized it by category, starting with the non-negotiables and working through the gear that separates a good day from a rough one.

This guide covers general construction site requirements. Specific trades — electrical, roofing, concrete, welding — have additional requirements addressed in their own guides. See [worknmore.com/guides](https://worknmore.com/guides) for the full library.

## The Non-Negotiables: OSHA-Required PPE on Construction Sites

Before we get to preference and comfort, there are items required by OSHA on virtually every general construction site. These aren't optional and in many cases are enforced by general contractors as a condition of being on site.

### Safety footwear

OSHA 29 CFR 1926.96 requires protective footwear where there is a danger of foot injury from falling or rolling objects, objects piercing the sole, or electrical hazards. On a general construction site, that means ASTM F2413-rated safety toe boots as a baseline. The specific requirements (steel toe, composite, puncture-resistant midsole, EH-rated) depend on the work being done — see the boot selection table below.

### Hi-visibility apparel

Any worker exposed to vehicular or equipment traffic on or near a construction site must wear ANSI/ISEA 107-compliant hi-vis apparel. Class 2 is the standard for most construction environments. If your site is adjacent to roads with traffic moving faster than 50 mph, Class 3 is required. Some projects or agencies may have stricter class rating requirements, please check with your supervisor, General Contractor or agency.

### Head protection

Hard hats are required where there is a possible danger of head injury from impact, falling or flying objects, or electrical shock. ANSI Z89.1 Type I or Type II. If you're working around electrical hazards, confirm your hard hat is Class E (electrical).

### Eye and hand protection

Safety glasses or goggles are required for work involving flying particles, dust, or chemical exposure. Gloves are required where hand injury hazards exist — which on most construction sites is most of the time. Match glove type to the task or requirements of the site.

OSHA's January 2025 PPE update requires that all PPE — including hi-vis, safety footwear, and gloves — must properly fit each employee. One-size-fits-all is no longer sufficient. See our [OSHA PPE Fit Rule guide](#) on the Work 'n More resource guides for full details.

## Full Construction Site Gear Guide

Here's a complete breakdown of what to look for in each gear category, with the brands carried at Work 'n More.

Gear Category	What to Look For	Recommended Brands
<b>Work Boots</b>	ASTM F2413 safety toe (steel or composite). Slip-resistant sole. Waterproof for wet sites. 6" or 8" height for ankle support on uneven terrain.	<i>Georgia Boot, KEEN Utility, Timberland PRO, Irish Setter, Danner, Brunt Workwear, Ariat Work</i>
<b>Work Pants</b>	Reinforced knees. Double-front or built-in knee pad pockets for concrete and framing work. Room to move — not slim cut. Duck or canvas fabric for durability.	<i>Carhartt, Ariat, Brunt Workwear, , Dickies</i>
<b>Work Shirts &amp; Tops</b>	Long sleeve for sun and abrasion protection. Durable fabric — avoid thin cotton on active sites.	<i>Carhartt, Ariat Work</i>
<b>Hi-Visibility Apparel</b>	ANSI/ISEA 107 Class 2 minimum for roadway-adjacent work. Class 3 for high-speed exposure. Vest, jacket, or hoodie depending on season. Class 1 may work on some jobs without traffic.	<i>Carhartt, Helly Hansen, Portwest, Radians, Majestic, PIP</i>
<b>Outerwear</b>	Waterproof shell or insulated jacket for cold/wet conditions. Look for site-friendly features: no loose drawstrings, hand-warmer pockets, layering room.	<i>Carhartt, Helly Hansen Workwear, Grundéns, Ariat Work, Portwest</i>
<b>Base Layers</b>	Moisture-wicking fabric — not plain cotton. Thermal weight for cold seasons. Lightweight for layering in mild weather.	<i>Carhartt Force</i>
<b>Gloves</b>	Task-specific: general work gloves for most tasks, cut-resistant for demolition or glass handling, impact-rated for heavy equipment. Replace when worn through.	<i>Available at all Work 'n More locations</i>
<b>Rain Gear</b>	Waterproof jacket and bibs rated for sustained rain — not just a light	<i>Grundéns, Helly Hansen Workwear, Carhartt, Portwest, Radians</i>

shell. Taped seams. PNW sites demand gear that holds up to all-day wet conditions.

All brands listed above are available at Work 'n More locations in Everett, Lynnwood, Tukwila, and Arlington, or online at [worknmore.com](https://worknmore.com). Associates can help you match gear to your specific job site requirements.

## Choosing the Right Boot for Your Work

Safety footwear is the single most important gear decision for most construction workers — and the one where fit and spec both matter. Here's how to match the boot to the job.

Work Type	Boot Feature Needed	Why It Matters
<b>General site work</b>	Steel or composite safety toe, slip-resistant sole	Protection from falling objects, grip on uneven terrain
<b>Concrete &amp; framing</b>	Waterproof, 6"–8" height, cushioned midsole	Wet pours, standing on hard surfaces all day
<b>Roofing</b>	Soft toe acceptable, high-traction outsole rated for roofing	Slip resistance is the primary hazard
<b>Electrical work</b>	EH (electrical hazard) rated — no steel toe unless also EH-rated	Steel conducts electricity — EH rating is non-negotiable
<b>Demolition</b>	Steel toe, puncture-resistant midsole (ASTM F2413 P)	Nail boards, debris, and sharp material underfoot
<b>Working near forklifts</b>	Metatarsal guard if required by employer PPE program	Protects top of foot from roll-over impact

### On fit

Boot fit matters more than most workers realize. A boot that's too tight causes foot fatigue and pain by mid-shift. Too loose and your foot slides, causing blisters and reducing the effectiveness of safety toe protection. Try boots on with the socks you'll wear on site, walk the floor, and have an associate check that you have a thumb's width at the toe.

Width sizing matters too — especially for workers with wider feet or who are on their feet on hard surfaces all day. Most of our boot brands offer M, D (standard), W, and EE widths. If you've always bought boots that felt tight, you may just need a wider width.

Work 'n More carries one of the largest work boot selections in the Pacific Northwest. Our associates are trained to fit work boots — not just sell them. Visit any location or browse our full boot selection at [worknmore.com](https://worknmore.com).

## Layering for the Job Site: A Practical System

Construction work means variable conditions — early morning cold, afternoon heat, and in the Pacific Northwest, rain that can arrive at any time. A layering system beats buying separate gear for every scenario.

### Base layer

Moisture-wicking fabric against your skin. Carhartt Force is the go-to — it wicks sweat, dries fast, and doesn't hold odor the way plain cotton does. Avoid 100% cotton as a base layer if you're working hard. In winter, step up to a midweight thermal base layer.

### Mid layer

A fleece or insulated sweatshirt for cold mornings. Should be easy to take off and tie around your waist when you warm up. Carhartt and Ariat Work both make site-friendly mid layers with minimal hardware to snag on materials.

### Outer layer

A waterproof shell or insulated jacket for cold and wet conditions. Look for site-appropriate features: no loose drawstrings near moving equipment, hand-warmer pockets, and enough room to layer underneath. Helly Hansen Workwear, Grundéns and Carhartt are purpose-built for sustained wet conditions — a lightweight rain shell isn't enough for all-day Pacific Northwest rain.

### Hi-vis outer layer

If your site requires hi-vis and you're wearing an outer layer, your hi-vis needs to go over it — not under. Carhartt, Helly Hansen, Grundes & Portwest make hi-vis jackets and hoodies that meet ANSI 107 Class 2/3 so you don't have to layer a vest over a jacket. It's worth the investment if you're working through fall and winter.

Rain bibs paired with a waterproof jacket keep you dry from shoulders to knees. If you're pouring concrete or working in standing water, bibs are worth it. Grundéns, Helly Hansen & Carhartt all carry commercial-grade rain bibs carried at [Work 'n More](#).

## For Foremen and GCs: Outfitting a Crew

If you're responsible for outfitting workers rather than buying for yourself, a few things simplify the process significantly.

### Standardize on categories, not exact items

Requiring that every worker have an ANSI Class 2 hi-vis outer layer and ASTM F2413 safety toe boots is enforceable and auditable. Requiring a specific brand or model creates headaches when items go out of stock or workers need different widths or fits. Set the standard, let workers choose within it.

### Account for sizing variability

On a crew of any size, you'll have workers who don't fit standard sizing — wider feet, smaller frames, women who need women's cuts. Stock or order a range. OSHA's 2025 PPE fit rule makes this a legal requirement, not just good practice.

### **Work 'n More business accounts**

If you're outfitting more than a handful of workers, a Work 'n More business account simplifies ordering, gives you access to volume pricing, and lets you standardize what your crew is buying. You can set up an account in any of our four locations or online.

Set up a business account or talk to us about crew outfitting programs at [worknmore.com](https://worknmore.com) or stop into any Work 'n More location. We work with contractors, GCs, and crew managers across Washington.

## **Making Your Gear Last**

Construction gear takes a beating. A few habits extend the life of your investment significantly.

### **Work boots**

Rotate between two pairs if you can — letting a boot dry out fully between wears significantly extends its life. Clean mud off regularly. Condition leather boots with a quality boot oil or conditioner every few weeks. Replace when the midsole compresses (the boot loses its cushion) or the outsole wears through — not just when the upper looks rough.

### **Hi-vis apparel**

Wash hi-vis gear inside out in cold water. Avoid fabric softener — it degrades the reflective tape. Inspect the reflective strips regularly; if they're cracking or peeling, the garment no longer meets ANSI 107 standards and should be replaced. Most hi-vis apparel has a service life of 25–40 wash cycles under normal use.

### **Outerwear and rain gear**

Re-proof waterproof jackets with a DWR (durable water repellent) spray every season, or when water stops beading on the surface. Most rain gear from Grundéns, Carhartt and Helly Hansen holds up to regular washing — check the care label, but most tolerate machine wash on cold. You can also find DWR waterproofing products at Work 'n More.

### **Work pants**

Turn inside out before washing to preserve color. High heat in the dryer wears out reinforced stitching faster — medium or low heat extends life. If a seam goes, get it repaired before the tear spreads.

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## **Shop Construction Workwear at Work 'n More**

Work 'n More is the Pacific Northwest's workwear superstore, with four Washington locations and full online ordering. We carry everything on this list — from boots to base layers to rain gear — in sizes and fits for every worker on your crew.

Our associates know the gear and the job site requirements. If you're not sure what you need, come in and ask.

Shop online or find your nearest location: [worknmore.com](https://www.worknmore.com)

Everett · Lynnwood · Tukwila · Arlington

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