

OSHA PPE Fit Requirements: What Employers Need to Know

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If you manage a crew, you already know PPE is required on the job site. What changed in January 2025 is that OSHA now explicitly requires that PPE actually fits each employee — not just that it's provided.

That distinction matters more than it sounds. For years, many employers handed out one-size vests, oversized gloves, and standard-width boots and considered the obligation fulfilled. The new rule closes that gap. This guide explains what changed, what it means for your operation, and what steps to take to stay compliant.

This guide is written for employers, safety managers, and operations managers in construction, manufacturing, warehousing, landscaping, and other industries where PPE is required. It is a plain-language resource, not legal advice. For specific compliance questions, consult a safety professional or OSHA directly.

What Changed in January 2025

OSHA's general PPE standards have existed for decades under 29 CFR 1910.132 (general industry) and 29 CFR 1926.95 (construction). Both required employers to provide appropriate PPE — but neither explicitly stated that the PPE had to fit properly.

The January 2025 rule adds explicit language requiring that PPE must properly fit each affected employee. The rule applies to both general industry and construction, covering all common PPE categories: high-visibility apparel, flame-resistant clothing, safety footwear, gloves, hard hats, and eye and face protection.

The practical effect: providing a bin of one-size vests or telling workers to "figure it out" no longer satisfies the standard. Employers are now responsible for ensuring each worker's PPE fits correctly for the job being performed.

Key phrase from the updated standard: "The employer shall provide PPE that properly fits each affected employee." — 29 CFR 1910.132(d)(1), as amended January 2025.

Who This Affects

The rule applies to any employer in a covered industry who is already required to provide PPE. If your workers are in any of the following categories, this rule applies to you:

Construction and trades — general contractors, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, roofing, concrete.

Warehousing and logistics — workers operating near forklifts, loading docks, or high-traffic areas where hi-vis is required.

Manufacturing and industrial — any facility where FR clothing, chemical-resistant gloves, or other PPE is mandated.

Landscaping and outdoor operations — crews working near roadways where ANSI hi-vis is required.

Food processing and utilities — where cut-resistant gloves, FR, or specialized footwear are part of the safety program.

Work 'n More has business account programs for employers who outfit crews regularly. You can set up an account in-store or at worknmore.com to streamline ordering, manage sizing across employees, and access volume pricing.

PPE Fit Requirements by Category

Here is a practical breakdown of what proper fit means across the most common PPE types and what to look for when outfitting your crew.

| PPE Type | Fit Requirement | What to Look For |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hi-Vis Vests & Jackets | Must fit over outer garments without restricting movement. Cannot be oversized to the point of being a snag hazard. | Measure chest over heaviest layer. Size up for workers who wear FR coveralls underneath. |
| FR Clothing | Must cover all required body areas without gaps. Loose fits acceptable; too-tight fits compromise arc flash protection. | Verify coverage at wrists and waistline when worker reaches overhead. Women's cuts now widely available. |
| Safety Footwear | Must fit the actual foot — length, width, and instep. Ill-fitting boots cause fatigue and injury. | Allow workers to try on and walk before purchase. Width sizing (D, E, EE) matters as much as length. |
| Gloves | Must allow dexterity for the task performed. Oversized gloves increase injury risk. | Match glove type and size to the specific task. Keep multiple sizes on hand. |
| Hard Hats | Must be adjustable and properly seated on the head. Loose hats don't absorb impact correctly. | Use suspension adjustment. Replace after any impact even if no visible damage. |

Women in Trades: Why Fit Has Always Been a Problem

The January 2025 rule came in part because ill-fitting PPE disproportionately affected women in the workforce. Standard PPE has historically been designed for average male body dimensions.

Women wearing oversized vests, gloves, or boots weren't just uncomfortable — they were less protected.

OSHA's own research documented cases where PPE designed for men failed to cover required areas on women, or where oversized equipment created new hazards (snagging, restricted movement, poor dexterity).

With women representing a growing share of construction, logistics, and industrial workers, proper-fitting PPE is now both a legal requirement and a retention and safety issue.

Work 'n More carries women's cuts in Carhartt, Ariat Work, and other brands — including PPE and ANSI-compliant options. Ask an associate or visit worknmore.com to see current women's workwear and safety apparel inventory.

How to Audit Your Current PPE Program

If you haven't reviewed your PPE program since January 2025, here's a straightforward process to get compliant.

Step 1 — Inventory what you have

List every PPE type required on your job sites. Note the sizes currently on hand and whether multiple sizes are available for each category. If you have one size of anything, flag it for review.

Step 2 — Document employee sizing

For each employee required to wear PPE, record their sizing for each PPE type. This doesn't have to be complex — a simple spreadsheet with employee name, PPE type, and size covers the requirement. Update it when employees change.

Step 3 — Replace non-fitting equipment

Replace PPE that doesn't fit with appropriately sized alternatives. This includes women's-specific cuts where standard sizing doesn't fit properly. OSHA does not require a specific brand — just that the item fits and meets the applicable safety rating.

Step 4 — Document your process

Keep a record of how you assess and assign PPE sizing. In the event of an inspection or incident, documentation showing that fit was assessed for each employee significantly reduces liability exposure.

Step 5 — Train supervisors

Supervisors should know what properly fitting PPE looks like and how to identify when an employee's gear doesn't fit. Build this into new hire orientation and periodic safety reviews.

Need help outfitting a crew from scratch or updating existing gear? Work 'n More offers B2B programs for businesses of all sizes — from small crews to 100+ employees. Talk to us about sizing, volume orders, and account setup at worknmore.com or stop into any location.

Quick Reference: Safety Ratings That Affect Fit

When replacing PPE, make sure replacement items meet the same or better safety rating as what they replace. Fit and rating are both required — one doesn't substitute for the other.

Hi-visibility apparel: ANSI/ISEA 107. Class 1, 2, or 3 depending on traffic exposure. Class 2 is required for most roadway and construction work. Class 3 for high-speed roadway exposure.

Flame-resistant clothing: NFPA 2112 (flash fire) and NFPA 70E (arc flash) are the primary standards. HRC/CAT ratings (1–4) indicate arc flash protection level. FR garments must be properly sized to maintain their protective integrity.

Safety footwear: ASTM F2413. Look for the rating marks: I/75 (impact), C/75 (compression), EH (electrical hazard), SD (static dissipative). Women's safety footwear in wider size ranges is now widely available from major brands.

Cut-resistant gloves: ANSI/ISEA 105. A1–A9 cut resistance levels. Higher number = higher protection. Match to the specific hazard — don't size up in protection unnecessarily, as it reduces dexterity.

Outfit Your Crew at Work 'n More

Work 'n More is the Pacific Northwest's workwear superstore, with four Washington locations and full online ordering at worknmore.com. We carry the full range of OSHA-compliant PPE — hi-vis, FR clothing, safety footwear, and more — in sizes and cuts for every member of your crew.

Business accounts are available for employers who outfit crews regularly. Account holders get access to volume pricing, simplified reordering, and in-store assistance from associates who know the products and the standards.

Set up a business account or shop online: worknmore.com

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This guide is a general educational resource. Consult [OSHA.gov](https://www.osha.gov) or a qualified safety professional for compliance guidance specific to your industry and situation.