



Eye and Face Protection: *Safety Glasses*

If your job involves hazards from dust, flying objects or particles that may strike you from in front, you should be using some sort of safety glasses. If you normally use a faceshield in operations such as welding, you also need to wear safety glasses under your faceshield. Modern day safety glasses are lightweight, fashionable and comfortable to wear.



What Makes Them “Safety” Glasses?

Resistance to impact is the main difference between safety glasses and regular glasses, which often look like them. The American National Standards Institute, which sets standards for safety glasses, requires them to withstand the impact of a quarter-inch steel ball traveling 150 feet/second. You can’t depend on your prescription glasses for this kind of protection. Frames stamped with the imprint “**Z87**” meet stringent standards for strength and heat resistance.

Kinds of Safety Glasses

Standard safety glasses protect against impact from the front only. For this reason you can also get safety glasses with **side shields** to provide limited protection from the side for tasks such as sanding, buffing, and drill presswork. When hazards come from above and below as well as the side, safety glasses with **eye-cup side shields**, which curve around the eye area, offer the greatest possible protection.

If you still need more eye protection, consider using goggles or a facemask over your safety glasses.

Types of Lenses

What kind of lens is best for you? Glass lenses resist scratches and chemical damage and are easy to use in prescription glasses, but they are much heavier than other materials and shatter more easily. Although polycarbonate and plastic lenses do not resist scratching as well, they are much lighter and more impact resistant than glass lenses. You can even get safety glasses with prescription lenses.

Care and Use

Your safety glasses are designed to protect you from accidental injury. However, they will not withstand repeated impact. Inspect them for scratches, cracks, or other wear and replace them if they are scratched, bent or uncomfortable. Scratches not only interfere with your ability to see what you’re doing they also can weaken the structure of the lens and its resistance to impact. Lenses can be coated with special substances to keep them from fogging up or to make them more scratch resistant. Keep your glasses clean according to the manufacturer’s instructions (clean only with water). Store them in a clean dry place, preferably in a case with your name on it.

