



SAFE, YET STYLISH

PPE THAT LOOKS STYLISH IS MORE LIKELY TO BE WORN BY WORKERS

BY RICH VURVA

When it comes to personal protective equipment in general and eyewear and head protection in particular, style and comfort are just as important as function. If it doesn't look and feel good, workers are less likely to wear it. Here's a look at how these PPE manufacturers are addressing that issue.

LIFT SAFETY

The ability to produce stylish, but yet effective PPE is one of the top trends in the market today. The goal is to produce PPE that the end user wants to wear.

"One of the main challenges in the working environment related to industrial hazards is persuading end users to wear applicable PPE at all times. The majority of occupational injuries happen when PPE is not worn. By making stylish, yet protective products, we hope to keep workers safe and looking good," says Warren Johnson, senior marketing communications manager for Lift Safety.

Johnson says Lift Safety uses design experiences and influences from other industries and incorporates product trends that parent company, EVS-Sports, designs and produces.

"We strive to design products that are innovative and stylish; to look and feel like items that consumers like to wear outside of the workplace," he says.

What new technologies and materials are being introduced to improve productivity and durability?

"We are the leader in hard hat innovation for the industrial and construction worker. We introduced a new full-carbon fiber hard hat in 2017 called the Dax. Carbon is the strongest material used in hard hat manufacturing. It's also very lightweight and stylish. Again, a combination of style and functionality."

He adds that the market is heavily focused on head, hand and eye protection. Occurring at a rate of 2,000 per day, eye injuries are the most prevalent in the workspace. "In the head protection category, we are seeing companies move from the traditional style hard hats to a style more like a climbing or rescue helmet. They offer better side protection versus the standard hard hats that typically only protects the crown of the head," he says.

ERGODYNE

Currently, an emphasis in eye protection design is on

creating options that allow safety glasses to be customized for the individual worker and the task at hand. This includes options like anti-fog technology, polarization and impact protection beyond the ANSI standard.

Manufacturers are also trying to make even inexpensive glasses look “cool,” to produce PPE that workers will want to wear outside of work.

There is hot competition to meet the worker’s personal style taste.

“These trending performance and design characteristics are reflected in our Skullerz Safety Eyewear, including our latest models: Baldr and Skoll,” says Jim Grider, Ergodyne product manager. “Baldr is a durable, full-frame safety glass that provides broad visual coverage, while Skoll is a lightweight option with a sleek blade design that still delivers maximum visibility.

“Both models demonstrate how we deliver all the required UV, glare and impact protection, while offering a wide range of frame, lens and color options to meet personal style preferences at the same time,” Grider says.

That combination of safety and good looks usually translates into consistent employee compliance.

Another trend is in head protection for tasks that don’t specifically require hard hats, but put workers at risk, especially in confined spaces.

Bump caps, which incorporate a protective polycarbonate shell within a typical baseball cap, are growing in use in transportation, public utilities and other industries. Ergodyne is serving this specialized area with a new line of bump cap systems and cap inserts.

GATEWAY SAFETY

“For those working in dusty environments, foam-lined safety eye wear is a must,” says Katie Mielcarek, Gateway Safety marketing manager.

Gateway Safety expands the popular StarLite family and now offers a new foam-lined, anti-fog eye wear solution: StarLite FoamPro.

These safety glasses are lined with a soft, closed-cell foam to prevent dust and debris from getting into the eyes.

“This isn’t an average foam, though. StarLite FoamPro features new OptiFit foam technology, a revolutionary,



tapered foam designed to provide a more tailored fit and an improved seal around the eyes. OptiFit foam was developed to meet the needs of varying facial profiles, reducing gaps around the eyes with its graduated foam design,” Mielcarek says.

Recognizing that older workers need foam-lined safety eye wear too, FoamPro is available in a 1.5 and 2.0 bifocal Mag version as well.

“We looked at the current products in the market and wanted to develop something with superior performance, a Mag option and better fit and comfort,” Mielcarek says.

FoamPro, with the same popular look as the original StarLite, also offers superior style. Instead of a stark black foam color, which often produces a “raccoon-eye” look, FoamPro’s smooth foam is a soft gray color.

FoamPro is a powerful anti-fog solution as well. Venting channels along the foam lining help with air circulation behind the lens, and all lens options include Gateway Safety’s quality anti-fog coating. Together, these two features help combat fog in a tough way.

“FoamPro is truly a one-of-a-kind safety eye wear solution,” says Mielcarek. “It fits so many worker needs including dust protection, improved foam fit, anti-fog performance and a bifocal option to help workers see small parts or read detailed drawings.”

Just like the original StarLite, FoamPro is lightweight and third-party certified by UL to meet ANSI Z87+ and CSA Z94.3. With many products independently certified to meet ANSI and CSA standards, Gateway Safety ensures its products are not only safe, durable and of the highest quality but also products that workers want to wear. This helps companies increase safety compliance, improve the overall welfare of their employees and reduce the high costs associated with workplace injuries. **IS**