

Proper PPE Fit for All

**PROPER PPE FIT STRENGTHENS
SAFETY FOR EVERYONE**



**TOOLBOX
TALKS**



As more women enter mining and other industrial trades, it's clear that one-size-does-not-fit-all PPE leaves many workers without proper protection. Women often report gear that gaps, pinches, or shifts during work; issues that lead to altered equipment or skipped PPE, both of which increase risk.

It's important to understand why proper fit is necessary and the specific challenges women face.

Why Proper Fit Matters

- Poorly fitting PPE increases avoidable safety risks.
- Ill fitting footwear and workwear reduce mobility and stability.
- Gear that is uncomfortable or restrictive is less likely to be worn consistently.

When PPE is designed around a single "standard" body type, many workers are left to improvise with gear that doesn't match their proportions.

- Loose fabric can catch on equipment
- Oversized boots can reduce traction on uneven surfaces
- Restrictive clothing increases fatigue



In mining, where uneven ground, heavy machinery, and tight spaces are part of everyday work, these issues can quickly become hazards. Providing properly fitted PPE is one of the most effective ways to prevent injuries before they happen.

Understanding Fit Challenges for Women

- Most PPE on the market is still based on male sizing and proportions.
- Scaling down men's gear rarely provides accurate fit or performance.
- Access to female-specific PPE supports retention, comfort, and confidence on the job.

Purpose built options, including women specific footwear and low bridge safety eyewear for workers who need alternative frame geometry, provide better comfort, stability, and full protection. Making these options available supports inclusion, strengthens safety culture, and helps every worker perform at their best.



Learn more
essentialminerals.org

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What Can You Do?

In the field, workers can take practical steps such as:

- Flagging gear that restricts movement, and
- Reporting poor fit immediately,
- Asking for alternative PPE options when something doesn't feel right.

Supervisors can build on this by checking PPE fit during pre-shift briefings, documenting recurring issues, and escalating requests for replacements instead of expecting workers to “make do.”

These simple actions strengthen safety culture and ensure every crew member has gear that supports safe, efficient work.



Notes

Large empty rectangular area for taking notes.



This resource was produced in
partnership with Red Wing Shoes.

Learn more
essentialminerals.org