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249960 Employer Provision of Personal Protective Equipment and its Use by Latino Construction Workers

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Objective. OSHA Standard (1926.95) requires employers in the construction industry to provide protective equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE) for eyes, face, head, and extremities, as well as respiratory devices for all employees. This study documents adherence to this policy by employers of Latino construction workers, and it documents the role of employer provision of PPE in workers' use of PPE.

Method. Cross-sectional (N=120) and longitudinal data (n=108) were obtained from construction workers self-identified as Latino working in western North Carolina. Workers represented a variety of trades, including framing, masonry, roofing, and general labor.

Results. The availability of employer-provided PPE varied by type of PPE. Nearly 65% of participants reported their employer provided specialized hand tools (e.g., tools with soft, slip-resistant, or anti-vibration handles) without cost to the worker. By contrast, less than 30% of workers reported their employer provided hearing protection without cost to workers, and less than half (43%) reported their employer provided workers with no-cost head protection. Additional analyses indicate that employer no-cost provision of each type of PPE to workers is associated with more frequent use of PPE by workers.

Conclusion. Construction employers in western NC are not generally adhering to OSHA Standards in their provision of no-cost PPE to Latino workers. These results also suggest that construction employers' greater adherence to OSHA Standard 1926.95, either through enforcement or incentives, would contribute to greater use of PPE by Latino construction workers, and potentially, reduce the burden of occupational injury experienced by these workers.

Learning Areas:

- Diversity and culture
- Occupational health and safety
- Public health or related organizational policy, standards, or other guidelines
- Social and behavioral sciences

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe OSHA standards for the provision of personal protective equipment for construction workers.
2. Describe adherence to OSHA standards relevant to employers' provision of PPE.
3. Explain the potential value of employer provision of PPE in reducing occupational injury among construction workers.

Keywords: Immigrants, Construction Injuries

Presenting author's disclosure statement:

Qualified on the content I am responsible for because: I serve as a co-investigator on this project. I have conducted NIOSH sponsored occupational health research with immigrant workers for the past 12 years.

Any relevant financial relationships? No

I agree to comply with the American Public Health Association Conflict of Interest and Commercial Support Guidelines, and to disclose to the participants any off-label or experimental uses of a commercial product or service discussed in my presentation.

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