



PPE for Police Officers

The Comp Alliance works with a variety of departments, each with unique risks and hazards to control. One shared means of protection for all employees is the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Police departments are not without the need for proper PPE, whose safe use can prevent injuries while on patrol, during a chase, and back at the police station.

Police PPE is much more than donning a ballistic vest, and should include the following:

- **Footwear:** A well-fitting work boot with anti-slip soles can provide comfort and safety for officers often on their feet. Appropriate footwear can aid in foot pursuits and managing environments with broken glass, like auto accidents, and other debris.
- **Disposable Gloves:** To prevent the contraction of a bloodborne pathogen or drug exposure, like fentanyl, the barrier that gloves provide can be vital. Disposable nitrile or latex gloves used by police officers should fit comfortably and be durable. Training on Bloodborne Pathogens, including the use of disposable gloves, is required annually for officers.
- **Tactical Gloves:** Police gloves are generally designed for multiple uses including puncture resistance, shooting assistance, evidence collection, and grip improvement. Darker shades help to identify light-colored evidence and blend in with tactical gear.
- **Reflective Gear:** Police officers can be injured due to limited visibility from oncoming traffic while dealing with routine traffic issues. Reflective clothing should be worn for these situations. Follow current ANSI 107 standards for the appropriate reflective rates. Clothing reflections should cover the body 360 degrees and be rated at high visibility Level 3, including high-speed traffic and night-time reflectivity.
- **Hearing and Eye Protection:** While not worn on a routine basis, hearing and eye protection can help protect officers from loud noises, flying debris, or sunlight. Hearing protection can be difficult to utilize as some systems limit an officer's situational awareness, so investigate active systems that allow for outside awareness. Officers working daytime shifts could benefit from sunglasses with UV 400 ratings for protection from the sun's rays. Safety glasses should be worn where flying debris may be encountered to provide additional protection.
- **Clothing:** Ballistic vests are commonplace, and departments develop policies on their use and care. Follow manufacturer instructions for care and keep your vest dry before use. Wear a soft, comfortable shirt under the vest, and roll out new vests to improve comfort. Outerwear should be comfortable and provide clear identification. Any nighttime wear should have proper reflectivity.



As with any high-hazard job position, the proper use of personal protective equipment goes a long way to protect against recognized hazards. PPE must be approved by administration and be readily available for staff. At no time should PPE use be restricted for staff members. Remember, PPE only works if you wear it!