



Industrial & Occupational Impact Resistant Lenses

The Policy Issue

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2004 that eye injuries accounted for 69 % of all work-related, non-fatal facial injuries in the United States. (Harris, P 2004, “Nonfatal Occupational Injuries Involving the Eyes”, Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed July 31, 2013, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/cwc/nonfatal-occupational-injuries-involving-the-eyes-2004.pdf>.)

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) reports that each day 200 Canadian workers sustain eye injuries on the job, often resulting in lost time and, in some cases, either temporary or permanent vision loss. The majority of eye injuries are preventable. (CNIB, 2013, “Eye Safety at Work”, para.1)

This policy applies to eye and face protectors used in all occupational and educational operations or processes involving hazards to the eyes or face. Typical hazards include flying objects and particles, splashing liquids, molten metal, and ultraviolet, visible, and infrared radiation. Protective measures surrounding X-rays, gamma rays, high-energy particulate radiation, radioactive materials, lasers, or masers are not included in this policy.

Clinical Evidence

The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) accepted the recommendations made by the (CSA) Z94.3-07 (R2012) – “Eye and Face Protectors” standard (Canadian Standards Association, 2007) with respect to eye and face protectors used in industrial, occupational and educational operations. CSA has determined that glass lenses of all types do not meet the minimum standards for impact resistance in these settings. (CSA) Z94.3.1-09 (Canadian Standards Association, 2009) provides additional information on the selection, use and care of protective eyewear.

Policy Position

The Canadian Association of Optometrists supports in principle the prescribing of impact resistant lenses in all cases except those where such lenses will not fulfill the visual requirements of the particular patient.

The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends that impact resistant lenses dispensed by optometrists for use in occupational operations should comply with the CSA Z94.3-07 (R2012) – “Eye and Face Protectors” standard.

-Reviewed: July 31, 2013