

Personal Protective Equipment

## Sharing Insights Into Hi-Vis Safety Vests

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Work safety vests are a necessary form of protective clothing for workers across numerous industries. This type of safety gear ensures that others nearby can clearly see workers operating in low-light environments by providing visual recognition during both day and night operations.

Hi-vis safety vests are one of the most worn types of personal protective equipment (PPE) and are easily recognizable as crucial safety gear. The demand for high-visibility clothing has been on the rise over the past several years, as more and more companies recognize the needs to keep workers seen across work sites.

So, who sells safety vests? MCR Safety is one of the leading safety brands in America, and they've been selling and supplying safety vests to markets all over the world for decades now. Their products are stocked by some of the leading industrial distributors servicing end-users.

This article will highlight everything a user could want to know about safety vests, from the workers who use them to the standards that ensure they are protected. The opening sections highlight some of the requirements and standards of safety vests. MCR Safety also explores some of the industries that require increased visibility.

### OSHA Requirements

Are safety vests required by OSHA? The Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) general-duty clause dictates that ***PPE must be provided*** at no expense to workers whenever hazards can't be removed from the worksite. One such hazard is anyone coming into close contact with vehicular traffic and who is at serious risk of not being seen due to poor lighting.



OSHA requires that employees working on highway or road construction, for example, wear gear that makes them easily visible to drivers.

As MCR highlights in their *PPE article*, OSHA 1910.32 is the governing regulation for personal protective equipment, and it requires that employers provide it at no cost to employees. Safety vests are a form of personal protective equipment, which means they must be provided to workers.

OSHA requires that PPE meet performance safety standards developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). This kind of oversight is meant to keep American workers safe no matter what their profession. Concerning safety vests, OSHA leans on ANSI recommendations for vest standards.

## What Is ANSI?

As MCR describes in their *ANSI article*, ANSI is an acronym for the American National Standards Institute. Founded in 1918, it is a non-profit organization that reviews and manages standards for products, services, processes, and systems in the United States. ANSI does not create standards, but it approves standards established by representatives of organizations focused on the development of standards. ANSI 107-2020 is the standard that sets the rules for high-visibility clothing, which includes safety vests. Under 107-2020, several areas distinguish hi-vis safety vests. Here is a breakdown of the three core areas:

- **Visible Colors** – get people's attention. A hi-vis garment's background material must be a fluorescent color: yellow-green, orange-red, or red. A vest must have a minimum amount of fluorescent background material used in its construction to achieve a specific performance class.
- **Reflective Striping** – improves a person's visibility in low-light environments, such as at dusk, during bad weather, or at night. This happens because of retro-reflectivity, which returns light back to the original source.
- **Testing** – sets standards for safety vests. An accredited laboratory must test all hi-vis vests to ensure each garment meets ANSI 107 test requirements. Once testing is finalized, MCR Safety provides a Declaration of Conformity with each model.

## Construction, Traffic, and More

What is a safety vest used for at work? Employers and companies that run operations in potentially hazardous environments should ensure that their employees wear high-visibility safety vests to maintain safety. Industries such as construction have seen increased regulations where workers must now wear Class 2 hi-vis vests.



Construction workers at all types of construction sites should wear safety vests. Many sites contain moving equipment and vehicles, and visibility is key to safety.

Under *OSHA regulations*, employees working at certain sites and specific jobs must wear safety vests. One example is a road construction site. Those working around highways, such as construction laborers and flaggers, must wear hi-vis safety vests at all times.

Outside of construction, who needs to wear a safety vest? There is a laundry list of other industries that require hi-vis safety vests. With MCR Safety's decades of experience servicing industries, they've identified more than 20 end-markets requiring hi-vis gear. Here's a look at some:

- **Airports** – Workers who handle baggage and work within the path of taxiing airplanes and other vehicles at airports should all wear safety vests.
- **Crossing Guards** – As crossing guards guide and control pedestrian traffic and passing cars, good visibility is a must since many work directly on or near busy roads.
- **Drone pilots** – fly crewless vehicles. Since they're often standing in fixed positions, they must wear hi-vis gear to be easily identified by others on a job site.
- **EMS Paramedic** – As paramedics assess and apply medical care to individuals, they must remain visible to other emergency service workers and vehicles.
- **Firefighters** – combat flames, keeping us all safe. Fire and rescue teams that arrive on a scene need hi-vis gear to keep them safe and visible.
- **Highway workers** – maintain highways and many other municipal and non-municipal roads that involve traffic and passing vehicles, meaning visibility is essential to safety.
- **Hunters** – who trap, catch, or kill animals need to be visible to other hunters and people, especially if firearms or other dangerous equipment are involved.
- **NRA Range Officers** – manage firing ranges and are knowledgeable about a variety of firearms. They also know that safety must always be maintained, and staying visible means staying safe.
- **Parking Lot Attendant** – Working at a parking lot means there's a lot of traffic moving in and out

as cars are constantly being parked and picked up. When moving vehicles are present, stay visible.

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