



Employee Safety

## With Kimberly-Clark's PPE Upgrade, You Can See (More) Clearly Now

James Langford | Jun 08, 2023

Fit and function are critical considerations when designing and manufacturing safety glasses.

But form can't be overlooked, according to personal protective equipment maker Kimberly-Clark Professional.

"Eyewear is very much chosen based on how people look in it," says Bill Godfrey, business development manager for safety at the company.

If safety glasses look good, workers are more likely to wear them, which helps businesses overcome a common obstacle with **PPE compliance**: employees flouting requirements because they don't like the gear.

Whether their dislike is because of an uncomfortable fit, inadequate functionality or appearance, such behavior exposes them to heightened risk of injury and leaves their employers open to costly regulatory penalties.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the nation's top workplace safety regulator, imposed **\$654,315 in fines**—more than half of them on manufacturers—for violations of its protective eyewear rule in the 12 months through September 2022.

Helping customers avert the risky behavior at the root of those penalties is why Kimberly-Clark's top-selling Nemesis™ and Maverick™ models, which were recently upgraded, emphasize style along with state-of-the-art protection from workplace hazards.

The Irving, Texas-based company is boosting the fog-repelling properties of both lines this year, adding its proprietary KleenVision™ anti-fog coating to new items as existing inventory is depleted.

### Fending Off Flying Debris

For the Nemesis™ brand, it also introduced the Nemesis™ Foam line, which features a detachable foam gasket that can seal the gap between the frame and the wearer's face.

That gap is all too easy to overlook. Under existing standards, testing to determine whether **safety glasses** meet OSHA requirements focuses on how well they withstand a direct impact to the lens.

But in many situations—particularly for metalworkers who are cutting and shaping materials—there’s also a risk from hazards targeting workers’ faces at a variety of other angles, Godfrey says.

“Many injuries occur from dust or flying debris getting around the lens,” he explains. “Adding a foam kit to the product gives you enough of a seal to provide protection” in environments where the risk isn’t severe enough to warrant wraparound safety goggles.

“When companies mandate goggles, one of the first complaints is typically, “My goggles are fogging up. What’s worse? Me taking a chance of something flying at me or me not being able to see because of the fog?”” Godfrey says. “Adding a foam kit, we solve for both.”

In a 2022 test of Nemesis™ Foam, 81 percent of participants reported that it gave them a sense of enhanced protection without sacrificing comfort, the company says.<sup>1</sup>



Kimberly-Clark Professional Nemesis™ Foam Eyewear

Part of the Nemesis™ line’s enduring popularity comes from its nylon frame, which adjusts to a variety of head shapes and sizes.

While the earpiece hinges on most glasses are adjacent to the lens, those on the Nemesis™ are placed further back, providing additional protection by avoiding the gap that comes with the typical 90-degree angle.

The arms of the safety glasses are made from a softer, more flexible material with ridges that grip the

wearer's temple so that they don't fall off because of sweating even though they're not curved over the ears, Godfrey says.

The Nemesis™ also comes with a wide range of lenses to accommodate a variety of lighting conditions, from dim to extremely bright.

KleenVision™ anti-fog coating not only provides better resistance to fogging than previous versions, it's more durable, he says.

"Anti-fog coating has to be very thin," Godfrey says, "and because of that, if it's cleaned a lot, it can start to wear off and the glasses lose their anti-fogging properties. You want the coating to last for the life span of the glasses, and the higher-quality KleenVision™ allows that to happen."

While anti-fogging properties have long been important to wearers, they weren't required for safety glasses until the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) updated **Z87.1**, the industrial guideline referenced in OSHA regulations, in 2020.

The Maverick™, another top seller from Kimberly-Clark's lineup, offers some of the same features as the Nemesis™ in a more traditional style, complete with the curved earpiece common to prescription eyewear.

The first eyewear built for the company's KleenGuard™ Eye Protection brand, it offers not only premium anti-fog protection but also anti-scratch and anti-glare coatings, a browguard and side shields to cover the gap where the earpiece and lens meet and comfortable touch points on the nose bridge and the temples to prevent slipping and reduce pressure, the company says.



Kimberly-Clark Professional Maverick™ Eyewear

The two models are just a fraction of Kimberly-Clark's array of nearly two dozen options for safety glasses, designed to fit the differing needs of customers with a variety of backgrounds and preferences.

"When people ask, 'Why would I wear this frame over that frame?' there's always a reason, whether it's designed for fit, for function or it's strictly style," Godfrey says. "When customers start to narrow their choices, we can help guide them toward the models best suited for their needs."

<sup>1</sup> Based on an August 2022 user study

**What features does your business need most in safety glasses? Tell us in the comments below.**

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