

## **POF027: General platform presentation**

### **National Framework for PPE – A Conformity Assessment Infrastructure.**

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**Abstract**

The occupational risks of inhalation, dermal, and injury hazards confronting workers require vigilance in applying administrative, engineering, and personal protective controls to keep workers safe. The hierarchy of controls is a well-established public health paradigm applied to determine appropriate measures to maximize worker safety; however, applying these measures is just the beginning.

Once it is determined that administrative and engineering controls are not available to establish safe work conditions, employers must identify adequate PPE for the safety of their workers. What makes PPE adequate? How do employers and workers know that PPE is providing adequate protection? These questions are answered by identifying appropriate standards to which the PPE should conform, evaluating the PPE against test methods incorporated in the standards to demonstrate that PPE is capable of providing adequate protection, applying conformity assessment processes to validate the utility of the standards, and monitoring the PPE to ensure the manufacturer's claims are met throughout the product's lifecycle. The hierarchy of controls, the standards needed to provide adequate PPE, and the conformity assessment processes applied to the PPE collectively comprise the PPE Conformity Assessment Framework developed by NIOSH. This framework is the product of a multi-year effort of the Personal Protective Technology (PPT) Conformity Assessment Workgroup (PCAWG). This framework applies the knowledge gained through the PCAWG effort, to provide a tool for developing and monitoring PPE CA programs.

This Framework expands concepts beyond the traditional roles (e.g. conformity, facilitate trade, etc.) and activities of CA by more transparently linking them with an analysis of workplace hazards and protection requirements of PPE standards. This, in turn permits a CA program owner to trace hazards through PPE standards and products, using risk-based CA processes to enhance worker health and safety and provide greater confidence in the utility of PPE by and for workers. This talk will discuss the framework and efforts underway to apply the framework.