



Military Combat Eye Protection (MCEP) and the Authorized Protective Eyewear List (APEL)

FACT SHEET 63-013-0314

Eyesight is a critical factor that enables us to successfully perform mission tasks during deployments, training or maintenance. The MCEP Program provides the means to protect our Warfighters' eyesight.

Your eyesight is at stake: Although they make up less than 1% of the body's surface, our eyes are disproportionately injured when unprotected. Something as simple as sand blowing in your eyes can take you out of the fight temporarily, while shrapnel from IEDs and other blast effects to the eyes can make you combat ineffective for a much longer duration and can leave you blinded for life. The simple act of putting a transparent impact resistant shield between your eyes and what's coming at them can make all the difference in the world and prevent or limit the severity of 90% of eye injuries. You wouldn't go into the fight without your body armor and helmet, so be sure to use your MCEP as well.

World-Class Eye Armor for World-Class Warriors: Safety eyewear is not all the same. The Army's Program Executive Office – Soldier (PEO-Soldier) certifies all MCEP items to meet or exceed both the American National Standards Institute Z87 Safety Eyewear standard, and the U.S. Military ballistic fragmentation standards, which provide 5-7 times greater ballistic fragmentation protection for the eyes than standard Z87 approved eyewear. You need eyewear that has been proven to meet ballistic fragmentation standards. MCEP items meet or exceed these standards, and MCEP approved eyewear is authorized for use in deployments and military training for ground troops.

Look for the APEL Logo and Stamp: All MCEP approved eyewear can be found on the Authorized Protective Eyewear List (APEL). The distinctive neon green APEL logo is required to be on all MCEP packaging. In addition, since June of 2011 all new MCEP eyewear has the APEL name stamped, printed, embossed or stitched on the left temple or strap. This makes it easy to identify approved eyewear.



Only eyewear on the APEL is certified for use: APEL approval certifies that eyewear has been tested to meet the standard you need to protect your eyes while performing your mission. While some non APEL eyewear may meet this standard, most of it does not, and you have no way to know – why risk your eyes and your sight? Use only APEL eyewear for your deployments, training and eye hazardous military duties.

Even if you need prescription glasses - we've got you covered. If you don't need glasses to see well, you can use any MCEP device. Warfighters who need glasses need an MCEP device with an approved prescription insert. MCEP devices are tested with prescription inserts to meet the same ballistic fragmentation protection standards. Inserts can be ordered through your local military eye clinic. If you are at an approved deployed location, you can re-order glasses and inserts using G-eyes at: <https://g-eyes.amedd.army.mil>. Beginning in summer 2014 all MCEP devices will use a single, universal insert. This means you won't have to order a new insert if you decide to change to a different MCEP model. **ONLY approved MCEP prescription inserts can be used in MCEP eyewear - using non-approved inserts or taping/gluing lenses into the eyewear puts you at significant risk of an eye injury.**

Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program (63)
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Visit our website: www.DoDVision.com
Or e-mail us at: Tri-ServiceOptometry@amedd.army.mil
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

Get MCEP only from approved sources: If you buy your own MCEP device, you should purchase it only from Military Clothing Sales Stores¹. In the Army MCEP is issued in basic training, at Central Issuing Facilities, and it can be requisitioned through standard supply channels. In current deployments MCEP is also issued through the Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI).

Use your MCEP On and Off Duty: MCEP provides eye protection both on and off duty:

On Duty: While deployed the rule of thumb is, “any time your helmet is on, your MCEP should be on”. The Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program (TSVCRP) advocates taking that a step further when deployed: “any time you are outdoors, your MCEP should be on.” Furthermore, beyond deployment the “train as you fight” concept applies. MCEP should be used in all training, just like it would be used during actual combat or deployment.

Off Duty: Many Warfighters do not realize the danger of an eye injury doesn’t end when they leave their deployment or training area. Many activities that military members do routinely – grounds keeping, maintenance, and shop work – all present significant potential for eye injury. These activities occur both at work and at home. Common home tasks like lawn mowing, weed whacking, auto maintenance, and working with power tools are some of the most common sources for eye injuries in United States households. In fact, according to an analysis of emergency department visits for eye injuries in 2005², home is where 44.6% of serious eye injuries now occur with work related injuries at 20.3%.

MCEP meets most of your eye safety needs: With the exception of racket sports and paintball (which have specific protective eyewear requirements specified by ASTM International), and some work activities like welding, MCEP eyewear meet the eye protection needs for most other eye hazards – they are even available with laser protection when missions require that protection. All MCEP lenses (even the clear lenses) also provide at least 99.9% UV protection for an added health benefit. The Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program (TSVCRP) strongly encourages warfighters to use their MCEP for non-combat, non-deployment, non-training activities where eye hazards exist. That includes home and work. Remember, an eye injury at home is just as much of a threat to your vision as one that happens in the field.

Protect yourself – use your MCEP! Protect the sight to fight!

Additional Links:

ASTM International: <http://www.astm.org/>

MCEP page at PEO-Soldier: <https://peosoldier.army.mil/equipment/eyewear/>

References:

1. ALARACT 209/2009 - Unauthorized Procurement of Ballistic Protection, Body Armor and Other Safety Items, July 2009
2. Incidence of Emergency Department–Treated Eye Injury in the United States. Gerald McGwin, Jr, MS, PhD; Cynthia Owsley, PhD, MSPH. Arch Ophthalmol. 2005;123:662-666.