



Driftless Prairies: Native Ecosystems

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- [Blog](#)
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The PPEs of Ecological Restoration

We were brush cutting yesterday; I was hot and sweaty and all I wanted to do was get that hard hat off! Then I began thinking about my friend who was recently hurt with a brush cutter; gave me a whole new appreciation for my hot, hard hat!

The value of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) cannot be understated. It can save your life and it can maintain your quality of life. Being maimed or lamed will certainly ruin the way you do things now and not worth the risk!

I think of PPE as 1) knowing the proper types to wear with certain equipment and 2) knowing how to take care of it. Maintenance of the equipment and keeping blades sharp is equally important but not the focus of this writing.

Below is a listing of the types of PPE necessary for the activities that I normally participate in and some additional information about the PPE.





Chainsaw PPE requirements

- Hard hat with face shield and ear muffs
- Chaps – these are made from cut-resistant material
- Gloves
- Sturdy, leather boots

Brush cutting PPE requirements

- Hard hat with face shield and ear muffs
- Gloves
- Sturdy, leather boots

Prescribed burns PPE requirements

- Hard hat with face shield and shroud – The face shield is invaluable and keeps the heat at bay incredibly well.
- Fire-resistant pants and shirt
- Sturdy, leather boots
- Heavy, leather gloves



Maintenance of your PPE should not be an afterthought. At one time, I thought a hard hat was good until it wasn't any longer. Then I learned that the "wasn't any longer" could be when something hit your head and the hat cracked and so did your skull. This is not the place to be frugal; replace the hat even then it "looks" good!

USDA has a good article regarding maintenance and repair of chain saw chaps. There are several styles of chaps. I prefer the apron type because you can take them on and off as needed (when you're not chain sawing no point in putting wear and tear on them).

Fire-resistant clothing can be very expensive and finding it in women's sizes was a challenge until I discovered this site. No more excuses for me to not have the proper clothes!! Don't get hung up on the brand name, but look for clothing that has a fire level rating. Level 1 and Level 2 are the most common ratings and sufficient for prescribed burns.

- [National Fire Fighter Corp](#) offers women's clothing
- [OSHA](#) has a good article on fire resistant clothing

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