



## Selecting High-Visibility PPE

One of the most important questions to consider on any construction jobsite is “how well can others see me?” Wearing the proper amount of high-viz apparel AND choosing the right color can sometimes mean the difference between life or death.

- 1) **Amount of high-viz material:** An ANSI 107 compliant Class 2 traffic safety vest or shirt has a very specific amount of background material (fluorescent yellow-green, fluorescent orange-red, or fluorescent red). The garment must also have a specific amount (square inches) of retro-reflective striping (Think of this as crushed glass glued into stripes). The stripes do not glow in the dark, but will reflect back to a light source. So when a car is driving down the road at night, you can clearly see these stripes jump out at you from a distance. If a customer pays more to get a Class 3 garment, it simply has more background material and reflective striping. For liability reasons, many safety professionals are starting to outfit their workers in Class 3 garments. If there is a death involving a road worker, some lawyers might try to convince a jury that the company was too cheap to purchase the best, most highly reflective work wear and this resulted in the employee’s death.
- 2) **Choosing the right color:** As mentioned above, there are technically three official colors used for ANSI compliant clothing; however, let’s keep it simple and say you select either lime or orange. Now, envision one of the many construction zones you have driven through. Chances are you encountered countless orange cones, signs, and barrels. Suppose our friendly construction worker needs to stand or work right near all these orange barrels, and he puts on an orange traffic

safety vest. In reality, traffic will not see him nearly as well as if he were to wear a lime vest. So, contrasting colors does make sense. Granted, we also see many lime cones, signs, and barrels, so we have to look at both options. Another concept might be to wear a vest that has both orange and lime (two-tone) on it!

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