

Eye Protection for Jewelers and Silversmiths

Appropriate eye protection should be worn at all times in a metalsmithing studio. You never know when a saw blade, stake, or hammer could fracture, hurling a fragment towards your eyes. Pickles, patinas, and other chemicals splash when it is least expected. Since accidents are never anticipated, safety glasses should be worn at all times in the studio. If you wear corrective lenses, it is recommended to wear prescription glasses in the studio, made with polycarbonate lenses. The larger the frame, the safer your eyes will be.

There are many types of commercially available safety glasses, ranging from plastic goggles that can be worn over prescription lenses, to safety glasses with close-up magnification at the bottom of the lens, to prescription safety glasses, to a full-face shield. It does not seem possible to be “too safe”.

Eye Protection from Torch Flames – for Jewelers and Silversmiths

When using a torch, any safety glass will protect your eyes from the heat (which dries the eyes), as well as splatters and impact. Specially tinted lenses are a good idea, particularly with oxygen-fuel torches, which have particularly bright flames. A pair of welding glasses provides protection from ultraviolet (UV) and infrared (IR) light. Shade number 3 or 4 is probably adequate protection for most soldering, and is fairly inexpensive. Unfortunately, they are dark enough to make it difficult to see details and the color of hot metal when soldering. For platinum, a darker shade, #5 or #6 is recommended.

Glass workers often use didymium lenses. These lenses block bright yellow flare, but not much UV and little or no IR. Companies that cater to glass workers have been developing lenses with better UV and IR protection that filter out less of the visible light, making it easier to see when soldering.

UV and IR protection combined with good visibility is difficult to find, and tends to be expensive. Consult your eye doctor about the best and appropriate protection for you and your situation; search the internet; read the technical information offered carefully. My most recent research finds that Aura Lens makes the best lenses that block UV and IR, without being so dark that it is difficult to see to solder. Lenses are available in many frames, with or without magnification, as well as clip-ons and frames that fit over prescription glasses.

Sources:

www.auralens.com

ARU-300

www.waleapparatus.com

www.mountainglassarts.com

