



## JULY 2013

# EYE INJURY PREVENTION MONTH

### PROTECT YOUR VISION ON AND OFF THE BATTLEFIELD



#### OVERVIEW

July is Eye Injury Prevention Month. This month and throughout the year, the Vision Center of Excellence (VCE) focuses on measures to protect the eye from preventable injuries. Wearing the proper Department of Defense (DoD) approved eye protection when performing combat, non-combat, workplace and extracurricular activities can prevent many eye injuries.

#### DOD APPROVED EYE PROTECTION

Serious eye trauma was the second most common injury from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, with 16 percent of all casualties suffering eye damage ranging from distorted vision to blindness.<sup>1</sup> Military Combat Eye Protection (MCEP), as identified on the [Authorized Protective Eyewear List \(APEL\)](#) is proven to prevent eye injuries and reduce the severity of ocular trauma. APEL-approved eyewear is designed to effectively protect Service members as they execute their missions. However, this protection is only effective when it is worn properly.

Eyewear on the APEL includes both spectacles and goggles and is made for non-prescription and prescription users. This eyewear carries an identifying "APEL" approved logo on the left side of the frame. Service members should look for this label or branding to assure they use the highest degree of eye protection on the market. The Qualified Products List (QPL) is a list of manufacturers who have had their products examined and tested, and who have satisfied all applicable qualification requirements for their product.

To reduce eye injuries, it is imperative that Service members wear APEL-approved protective eyewear, whenever engaging in tactical operations of all kinds, conducting training, or performing other tasks where there is risk of eye injury. APEL-approved eyewear can also be worn at home and off-duty when eye protection is recommended. Example activities include lawn care and working with hazardous materials.

In summary, the VCE urges the use of the APEL-approved protective eyewear on the battlefield to prevent eye injuries and reduce the severity of ocular trauma, as well as in day to day activities to protect and preserve vision whenever possible.

<sup>1</sup> DoD Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center, Medical Surveillance Monthly Report (MSMR), Volume 18, No. 5, Eye Injuries, Active Component, U.S. Armed Forces 2000-2010 pp. 2-7, May 2011



