OSHA-Hierarchy of Controls

Controlling exposures to occupational hazards is the fundamental method of protecting workers. Traditionally, a hierarchy of controls has been used as a means of determining how to implement feasible and effective controls.

**OSHA requires that employers use the hierarchy of controls in order of preference for protecting the worker.**

**Hierarchy of controls in order of preference:**

1. **Elimination of hazard;** Substitution with safe alternative.
2. **Engineering;** Ventilation & wet methods.
3. **Administrative;** Work practices, scheduling workers to minimize exposure, extended breaks, etc.
4. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);** Respiratory and hearing protection, protection of face, hand, feet, eyes & whole body.

The idea behind this hierarchy is that the control methods at the top of the list are potentially more effective and protective than those at the bottom. Following the hierarchy normally leads to the implementation of inherently safer job-sites, ones where the risk of illness or injury has been substantially reduced.