

# Safety Glasses Cleaning Station

by Byron Papa



When I look around a job, it seems like the number of workers *not* wearing safety glasses far outnumber the ones that do. I have to admit, I resisted using them for years myself until my nearsightedness eventually left me no choice. Nowadays, I feel naked without my prescription safety glasses in place.

One of the main reasons most of us don't like safety glasses is that on a real-world construction job, they're almost impossible to keep clean. Wiping them down with a dusty shirt is akin to rubbing them down with pumice. You quickly wind up with scratchy lenses. Polycarbonate plastic safety lenses may be virtually unbreakable, but they also happen to be the easiest things on earth to scratch.

After putting up with blurry vision long enough, I came up with a simple, low-tech approach to quickly and effectively cleaning my glasses on site.

In a plain plastic toolbox (about the size of a fishing tackle box), I organized:

- A rectangular Tupperware food container (about 6x8x4 inches) to hold cleaning solution. To make the solution, I fill the container halfway with water, then add one to two drops of ordinary dishwashing liquid. This much soap is just enough to break down any oils on the lenses without leaving them streaky.
- A small (four ounce) Nalgene bottle filled with extra dishwashing liquid.
- A small, cube-shaped box of tissues. Kleenex-brand "Ultra" tissues are reportedly impregnated with a silicon-based lotion that makes them safe for cleaning glasses without scratching.
- A bottle of lens cleaning/defogging agent. I've used several kinds, and they all seem to work about the same. They are only slightly effective on very humid days, which, unfortunately, are all too common here in the South.
- A few miscellaneous items: an eye-glasses repair kit, some self-adhering moleskin to keep the frames of new glasses from chaffing (plus a pair of scissors for cutting the moleskin), and a small bottle of nail polish remover for removing paint splatters from polycarbonate lenses. I even have room for an extra pair of safety glasses.

This kit is effective because it allows me to keep abrasive particles off my glasses without having to depend on finding a faucet nearby. After rinsing (I usually dip twice), I use a couple tissues to dry off the lenses. Then I spray them with the defogging agent.

There's not much else to it. This little kit cost me less than \$20. I've been using it for about a year and it works great. Even better, it encourages my carpenters to use safety glasses regularly, so it's worth every dime. ■

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*The author's crew keeps their safety glasses clean and free of scratches using this simple cleaning station. It contains a rinsing basin, defogging solution, and soft tissues, plus items such as a glasses repair kit and nail polish remover for removing paint splatters from plastic lenses.*