



City of Westminster

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
POLICY

INDEX

Contents	Page
Cover	1
Index	2
Personal Protective Equipment	3
Personal Protective Equipment Regulations	4
Assessing the Suitability of PPE	4 – 5
Routes of Entry into the Body	5 – 7
Specific Types of PPE	7 – 12
Management Responsibilities	13
Employees Responsibilities	14
Legal Standards	14
Useful Contact Numbers	15

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**) should always be regarded as a “**last**” control option. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Amendment Regulations (**MHSWR**) 2006 require employers to identify and assess the risks to health and safety present in the workplace, so enabling the most appropriate means of reducing those risks to an acceptable level.

There is a hierarchy of control measures and PPE should always be regarded as the “**last resort**” to protect against risks to health and safety. Engineering controls and safe systems of working should be always be considered **first**. The importance of PPE should not be misunderstood, as it plays a crucial role in preventing and reducing many occupational fatalities, injuries and diseases. However before management consider providing staff with PPE they must first consider and evaluate their control options via consideration of the hierarchy of control.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) require employers and the self – employed to identify and assess workplace risks to health and safety, thereby identifying the most suitable way of reducing risks to an acceptable level. The reasons for this approach are as follows:

PPE only protects the person wearing it, whereas controlling the risk at source can protect everyone.

Theoretical maximum levels of protection are seldom achieved using PPE, and the real level of protection is difficult to assess. Effective protection can only be achieved by PPE which is correctly fitted, maintained and properly used at all times.

PPE may restrict the wearer by limiting mobility, visibility or by requiring additional weight to be carried the user.

The use of PPE may reduce employee’s perception of the hazards they are dealing with.

Employers should therefore provide PPE to employee’s only where there is a health and safety risk that cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS

The principle requirements of the PPE at Work Regulations 1992 is that personal protective equipment is to be supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

The Regulations also require:

- that PPE is properly assessed before use to ensure it is suitable
- that PPE is maintained and stored properly
- that staff are provided with information and instructions on how to use the PPE safely
- that staff use the PPE provided correctly
- that PPE is compatible and adequate provision is made for the replacement of damaged or worn PPE

It should be noted that employers **cannot charge** employees for PPE, whether it is returnable or not. This includes **agency workers** if they are legally regarded as WCC employees. If the employment is terminated and the employee keeps the PPE without the employer's permission, then, as long as it has been made clear in the **contract of employment**, the employer may be able to deduct the cost of replacement from any wages owed.

ASSESSING THE SUITABILITY OF PPE

To allow the right type of PPE to be selected, employers must give careful consideration to the different hazards in the workplace and the risks that staff are likely to encounter. Employers **must** assess the suitability of the PPE and the level of protection it affords against the hazards/risks the employee is likely to encounter during their work activities.

Information on the levels of protection PPE provides can be obtained from the manufacturer and the **British Safety Industry Federation** (www.bsfi.co.uk).

When assessing the suitability of PPE employers should give consideration to the following matters:

- **is the PPE appropriate for the risks involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the hazard/risks will occur? For example eye protection designed for providing protection against agricultural pesticides will not offer adequate face protection for someone using angle grinders to cut steel or stone**
- **will the PPE provided prevent or adequately control the risks involved without increasing the overall level of risk to the employee or others**
- **does the provision of PPE prevent or adequately control the risks involved without increasing the overall level of risk**
- **can the PPE be adjusted to fit the wearer correctly**
- **has the state of health of those who will be wearing the PPE been taken into account**
- **what are the needs of the job and the demands it places upon the wearer? For example the length of time the PPE needs to be worn, the physical effort required to do the job and the requirements for visibility and communication.**
- **if more than one item of PPE is being worn, are they compatible? For example, does a particular type of respirator make it difficult to get eye protection to fit properly**

ROUTES OF ENTRY INTO THE BODY

The human body has natural defences against harm that can be circumvented in the work environment. A brief appreciation of how the bodies defences can be by - passed is important when giving consideration to the type of PPE and suitability of protection it provides the user. The principle routes of harm to the body are:

Ingestion: **Toxins, chemicals or poisons can be transferred into the body via the mouth. The main cause of this is via dirty hands and unsound hygiene practices. Exposure to toxic agents can result in the employee picking up toxins on the hands and transferring this into the body via dirty hands, food or contaminated cutlery and cups.**

[Corporate Health & Safety](#)

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Injection: Toxins, chemicals, poisons and bio – logical agents can be injected into the body when the skin becomes punctured via contact via sharp objects.

Inhalation: Air borne materials in the form of dust particles, water droplets or spray mists, vapours or gases can be inhaled via the mouth into the respiratory system.

Absorption: Toxins, chemicals etc in the form of alkalis or acids can be absorbed into the body via contact with the skin. Absorbent clothing can assist this process by retaining moisture for extended periods of time.

Contact with an Energy Source: Contact with moving plant or vehicles, materials falling from height or material being ejected from machinery and impacting with the body can cause harm.

It is possible that more than one type of risk exposure may be present in the workplace and the PPE provided will need to offer protection against several of the above. Examples would include:

Safety Footwear: This may need to offer protection against contact with an energy source (**vehicle**) footwear must also be water, acid and oil resistant and offer the user comfort as well as protection against environmental conditions such as snow, rain and extremes of heat.

Eye Protection: This may need to offer a specified level of protection against impact from an energy source such as a lathe, grinder or sand blasting or jet washing activities. It may further be required to offer protection against liquids or sprays and have the appropriate design features of seals etc. Consideration will also need to be given to its suitability for staff who wear glasses.

High Visibility Jackets: This would need to offer protection against contact with vehicles, be visible to overhead workers and crane drivers, and be water, oil and acid resistant. The PPE should offer protection against environmental conditions such as extremes of heat and cold. The jackets should be free of snags and loose ends that could be caught in moving machinery and be comfortable to wear.

In all of the above instances the PPE must be compatible with other PPE provided and afford the appropriate level of protection against the risks likely to be encountered during work activities. The PPE provided **must not** increase the risk to the user or introduce **additional risks**.

The **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** provide guidance and general information about types of PPE used in industry. For detailed information about PPE and the level of protection it provides the provider should be consulted directly.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF PPE

Head and Scalp Protection:

All forms of head and scalp protection must be suitable, correctly fitted and have an easily adjustable headband, nape and chin strap where appropriate. The relevant standards are BS EN 397 and BS EN 13087.

There are four primary purposes of head protection, to protect

The head in falls

Protect the head against falling objects, impact with fixed objects, or wielded weapons.

Protect the head by offering thermal protection.

Protect against entanglement and laceration to the head.

Hair – nets and caps are used for hygiene reasons, and to protect against scalping/entanglement particularly on machinery where injuries are possible.

Hazards

Impact from falling objects

Risk of head bumping

Hair entanglement

Chemical drips

Climate or temperature extremes

Options

Helmets

Bump caps

Hairnets

Sou'westers

Cape hoods

Some safety helmets incorporate, or can be fitted with, specifically designed breathing or hearing protection. Neck protection is also important, especially for welding and similar processes.

Eye Protection:

Protects the eyes against impact, cuts, splashes, mists and sprays. The relevant standards are BS 7028 Guide to the selection of eye protection for industrial and other uses and BS EN 166 Specification for eye protectors.

Eye protection must be regularly cleaned as dirty lenses lead to poor vision and may contribute to accidents. Scratched, pitted or cracked lenses should be replaced.

Where the user would normally wear corrective lenses, and is expected to wear eye protection on a regular and frequent basis then any goggles, glasses etc should meet the user's prescription requirements.

Hazards

Chemical or metal splash

Dust

Projectiles

Gas and/or vapour

Radiation

Lasers

Options

Spectacles

Goggles

Face screens

Helmet with face visors

Ensure the eye protection wearer has the right combination of impact/dust/splash protection for the work task or hazards likely to be encountered.

Hearing Protection:

Assessments under the “Noise at Work Regulations 1998” determine whether personal ear protectors are required in the workplace. The relevant standard for ear protectors is BS EN 352. Hearing protection should not be shared for hygiene reasons.

Hazards

Impact noise
High intensities
High and low frequencies

Options

Ear plugs or muffs

Hand and Arm Protection:

Hands play a leading role in most occupations and are exposed to a wide range of hazards. Risks include cuts, abrasions, heat, cold, chemical contamination, vibration, burns, infection, skin irritation and dermatitis.

Before selecting hand and arm protection, the hierarchy of control measures **must** be followed. Gloves and gauntlets provide the main form of hand protection against a range of industrial hazards:

Manual handling involves a risk of piercing by abrasive, sharp or pointed objects when handling goods. Gloves should not normally be worn where there is a risk of them being caught in machinery. Gloves and gauntlets are usually made from leather, chain – mail, rubber, knitted Kevlar or stout canvass. Gloves made from or containing **Latex** should **not** be provided.

Gauntlets should be worn where hands and arms come into contact with toxic or corrosive substances, for example when cleaning up chemical spills, or mixing and dispensing pesticide formulations.

Hazards

Abrasions, cuts and punctures, impact injuries
Temperature extremes
Skin irritation, disease or contamination
Vibration
Chemicals
Electric shock

Options

Gloves

Gauntlets

Mitts

Wrist cuffs

Armlets

Users should not wear gloves or mitts when operating machines, such as bench drills, where they might become caught. Make sure that gloves giving protection against all chemical exposures are appropriate. Use skin creams after working with water or solvents. Remember barrier creams offer limited protection.

Foot and Leg Protection: A wide range of safety footwear is available providing protection against many hazards to the feet including, crushing, slipping, piercing, temperatures, electricity, chemicals, cutting and chopping.

The relevant standard for safety footwear is BS EN 345.

Hazards

Water

Slips

Electrostatic build up

Falling objects, heavy loads, metal and chemical splashes, vehicles

Heat, cold, weather

Spray from leaks or pressure guns

Entanglement

Options

Safety boots and shoes with steel toe protection

Steel mid – sole protection

Gaiters

Leggings, spats and clogs

Thermal trousers

Boiler suites

Check sole patterns, material and tread; these features can help grip and prevent slips in different conditions. Also consider chemical – resistant, antistatic or electrically conductive soles. Consider ankle support and cushioning.

Body Protection: The regulations' definition of PPE excludes ordinary working clothes and uniforms which have no specific protection for the wearer. However body protection may be required for extended periods of work outdoors to protect against the weather, and to ensure high visibility during work where there is mixed vehicle and pedestrian traffic (See BS EN 471 Specification for high – visibility warning clothing).

When choosing body protection the following factors should be considered:

Comfort, for example, due to sweating
Cost and practicality of cleaning
Emergency procedures, such as buoyancy or the need to be identified or spotted in hazardous situations.
Level of hygiene control required
Level of personal contamination
Personal preference
Restriction of movement
Storage
Temperature and humidity fluctuation
Whether the process is wet or dry.

Hazards

Heat, cold and weather
Chemical or metal splash
Spray from pressure leaks or spray guns
Impact or abrasions
Contaminated dust
Excessive wear and entanglement clothing

Options

Conventional or disposable overalls
Boiler suits, coats, jackets, aprons
Chemical – resistant suits
Thermal clothing

The choice of material is important. It could be chain mail, non – flammable, antistatic, chemically impermeable, and high visibility. Also consider using safety harnesses when working from heights and life jackets and flotation devices when working near water – in the case of, for example, construction workers, water sports instructors, dock workers, building inspectors etc.

Other Types of Protection: This range of protective equipment is very wide and includes body harnesses, fall – arrest systems, rescue lifting and lowering harnesses, energy absorbers and lanyards. Such PPE is specialised and requires thorough training by competent persons, as it is often only used in emergency situations.

Skin Care and Barrier Creams: Some occupations are prone to skin diseases caused by contact with substances such as cutting oils, chemicals, degreasants, glass – fibre and some horticultural agents such as pesticides etc. The main condition is dermatitis, in a variety of forms.

The use of “**barrier creams**“, although traditional in many occupations, should not be considered as PPE. It provides negligible protection and is unlikely to be effective in preventing contact dermatitis. A properly - implemented skin – care hygiene programme, including emollient and skin – conditioning creams can help replace the natural skin oil removed by degreasants and solvents.

Before undertaking this, **advice** should be sought from independent skin – care specialists and/or the Occupational Health Service.

Lung Protection

Hazards

Dusts, gases, vapours

Options

Disposable respirators, half - masks or full - face mask respirators fitted with a filtering cartridge or canister

Powered respirators blowing filtered air into a mask, visor, helmet or hood, fresh air equipment, breathing apparatus.

Make sure the right type of equipment is identified and chosen, that it fits correctly, meets the appropriate standards and is regularly tested and maintained.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

HEAD OF UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Head of Unit should formulate internal arrangements to ensure compliance with the PPE procedures within his/her department, and to ensure all staff are made aware of the arrangements**
- **Head of Unit should ensure adequate funding and resources are made available for the provision, maintenance, replacement and storage of PPE within their service area**

MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Manager's are responsible for ensuring suitable and sufficient PPE risk assessments are completed for staff within their respective service area**
- **Manager's are responsible for ensuring all PPE risk assessments are recorded and retained for inspection**
- **Manager's are responsible for ensuring that PPE is available to all staff that needs it**
- **Manager's should ensure staff receive the appropriate information, instruction and training on the use and maintenance of PPE**
- **Manager's should ensure a suitable "maintenance log" is retained for matters such as cleaning, disinfecting, repairing, examination, testing/replacement of all PPE, which must be signed and dated as appropriate**
- **Manager's are to ensure adequate arrangements are made for the storage of and access to PPE**

EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Employee's must wear and use the PPE provided as directed by their manager**
- **Employee's must inform their manager with immediate effect if there is any loss or damage to any PPE provided**
- **Employee's must ensure that they take reasonable care of themselves and PPE provided**
- **Employee's must not misuse, interfere or amend any PPE provided for their use and protection**
- **Employee's must attend instruction and training on the use, maintenance and storage of PPE as directed by their manager**

LEGAL STANDARDS

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Amendment Regulations 2004

The Construction Head Protection Regulations 1989

Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

The Work at Height Amendment Regulations 2007

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

The Workplace Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992

The Abrasive Wheels Regulations 1970

The Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Health & Safety Policy Statement

Any serious incidents should be notified to the Departmental Health & Safety Manager

Incidents that require medical attention should be reported to the Occupational Health Service – by calling Ext 1963

Policy Revision Record			
First Issued	Review Date	Revised	By Whom
June 2004		February 2010	H&S Team
	February 2011	January 2011	H&S Team
	January 2012		

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

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