

HEALTH AND SAFETY
GUIDANCE NOTE

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)



NFU Mutual
Risk Management Services

INTRODUCTION

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is equipment that is worn by individuals to minimise the effects from hazards within the workplace. The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations specify the requirements employers must meet in relation to the provision and use of personal protective equipment at work.

What is PPE?

Personal Protective Equipment is all equipment (including clothing providing protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn by people at work to protect them against health and safety hazards. These typically include safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high visibility clothing, safety footwear, etc.

Hearing protection and respiratory protective equipment provided for most work situations are not covered by these Regulations because other regulations apply to them. However, these items need to be compatible with any other PPE provided.

Cycle helmets or crash helmets worn by employees on the roads are not covered by the Regulations. Motorcycle helmets are legally required for motorcyclists under road traffic legislation. However in off road situations, employers should provide suitable transport helmets, for example crash helmets for farm workers who use all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

Clothing is not considered PPE if it is:

- A uniform provided for the primary purpose of presenting a corporate image.
- Ordinary working clothing.
- ‘Protective clothing’ provided in the food industry primarily for food hygiene purposes.

PROVISION AND USE OF PPE

The main requirement of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations is that PPE is to be supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to

health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways.

Because the effectiveness of PPE can be easily compromised (e.g. it only protects the wearer and needs to be worn and fitted properly), it should always be considered as the last resort and used only where other precautions cannot adequately reduce the risk of injury or ill health. Even where engineering controls and safe systems of work are in place, hazards may still have the potential to cause harm. These could result in injuries and/or illness to:

- Lungs, e.g. from breathing in contaminated air.
- Hearing, e.g. from noisy tools and machinery
- Head and feet, e.g. from falling materials.
- Eyes, e.g. from flying particles or splashes of corrosive liquids.
- Skin, e.g. from contact with corrosive materials.
- Body, e.g. from extremes of heat or cold.

However, where PPE is the only effective means of controlling the risk of injury or ill health, then employers must ensure that it is available for use – free of charge.

Whenever PPE is issued it is advisable to have staff sign to acknowledge receipt of the equipment. An example PPE Issue Record Form is provided in Appendix 1. In addition, it is advisable to have employees sign to acknowledge having been instructed and trained on when and how to wear / use such equipment.

Most PPE is provided on a personal basis but may be shared by employees, for example where it is only required for limited periods. When shared, employers need to ensure such equipment is properly cleaned and, where required decontaminated to ensure there are no health risks to the next person using it.

Employers have a legal duty to ensure that employees wear relevant PPE. Employees also have a legal duty to co-operate with their employer and wear such equipment. Where an employee refuses a reasonable request to wear PPE then you should consider the use of formal disciplinary action.

ASSESSING SUITABLE PPE

Ensure any PPE you buy is ‘CE’ marked and complies with the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations. The CE marking signifies that the PPE satisfies certain basic safety requirements and in some cases will have been tested and certified by an independent body.







To allow the right type of PPE to be chosen, the different hazards in the workplace need to be considered carefully. Once you know what the hazards are, you can make an assessment of which types of PPE are suitable to protect against these hazards and for the job to be done. An example PPE Risk Assessment Form is included in Appendix 2.

The following factors should be considered when assessing the suitability of PPE:

- Is it appropriate for the risk(s) involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the risk may occur for example the weather if working outside, heating, noise, atmospheric conditions, etc.?
- Does it take account of ergonomic requirements and the state of health of the person who may wear it?
- Is it capable of fitting the wearer correctly and comfortably to properly protect them from the hazard, e.g. respirators?
- Is it effective to prevent or adequately control the risks involved without increasing the overall risk? Other factors to consider are, for example, the physical effort needed to do the job, how long the PPE needs to be worn, and the requirements for visibility and communication.
- Is it designed and manufactured to the applicable standard for that item of personal protective equipment?
- If more than one item of PPE is being worn, are they compatible? For example, does the use of a particular type of respirator make it difficult to get eye protection to fit properly?

Those who do the job are usually best placed to know what is involved, and they should be consulted and involved in the selection and specification of the equipment – there is a better chance of PPE being used effectively if it is accepted by each wearer.

The table below provides some examples of the types of PPE that can be used to protect parts of the body against particular hazards.

		Hazards	Choices
	Eyes	Chemical or metal splash; dust; projectiles; gas and vapour; radiation	Spectacles; goggles; face-shields Note: Where employees wear prescription glasses the employer should make a reasonable contribution to cover the cost of prescription safety glasses/goggles, as over glasses may not be suitable or practical.
	Head and Neck	Impact from falling or flying objects; risk of head bumping; hair entanglement	Helmets; bump-caps; hats; skull-caps; crash helmets.
	Breathing	Dust; vapour; gas; oxygen deficient atmospheres	Disposable face-masks or respirator; half / full face respirators; air-fed helmets; breathing apparatus
	Protecting the Body	Temperature extremes; adverse weather; chemical or metal splash; spray from pressure leaks or spray guns; impact or penetration; contaminated dust; excessive wear or entanglement of own clothing	Conventional or disposable overalls; boiler suits; coats; specialist protective clothing e.g. high visibility clothing; Kevlar clothing; chain-mail aprons
	Hands and Arms	Abrasion; temperature extremes; cuts and punctures; impact; chemicals; electric shock; skin infection; disease or contamination; vibration	Rigger gloves; disposable gloves; gauntlets
	Feet and Legs	Wet; electrostatic build-up; slipping; cuts and punctures; falling objects; metal and chemical splash; abrasion	Safety boots and shoes with steel toe caps (and steel mid sole); gaiters; leggings; spats

There will be considerable differences in the physical dimensions of different workers and therefore more than one type or size of PPE may be needed. The required range may not be available from a single supplier.

Suppliers should be able to advise on the different types of PPE available and their suitability for different tasks. In some cases, it may be necessary to obtain advice from specialist sources such as manufacturers equipment, industry bodies, PPE manufacturers etc.

TRAINING IN THE USE OF PPE

Users of PPE should be made aware of why the equipment is needed; when it is to be used, repaired or replaced; and its limitations. People involved in maintaining, repairing and testing the equipment and in its selection for use will also need training. Training should include elements of theory as well as practice in using the equipment, and should be carried out in accordance with any recommendations and instructions supplied by the PPE manufacturer.

The extent of the training that is required will depend on the type of equipment, how frequently it is used and the needs of the people being trained. Many manufacturers of PPE run training courses for users of their equipment and these courses may be of particular benefit to small users who do not have training facilities.

As well as initial training, users of PPE and others involved with the equipment may need refresher training from time to time. Records of training details should be kept to help with the efficient administration of the training programme.

RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING

Where respiratory protective equipment (RPE) is used it is vital that the selected RPE is adequate and fits the wearer properly. Ill-fitting face pieces can create inward leakages of airborne contaminants. As people come in all sorts of shapes and sizes it is unlikely that one particular type or size of RPE face piece will fit everyone.

Respirator fit testing must be conducted by a competent person on all wearers of tight fitting respirators to ensure that the equipment selected is suitable for the wearer. The best time to do fit testing is at the initial selection stage when individual users can be given a choice of adequate models of RPE.

SUPERVISION

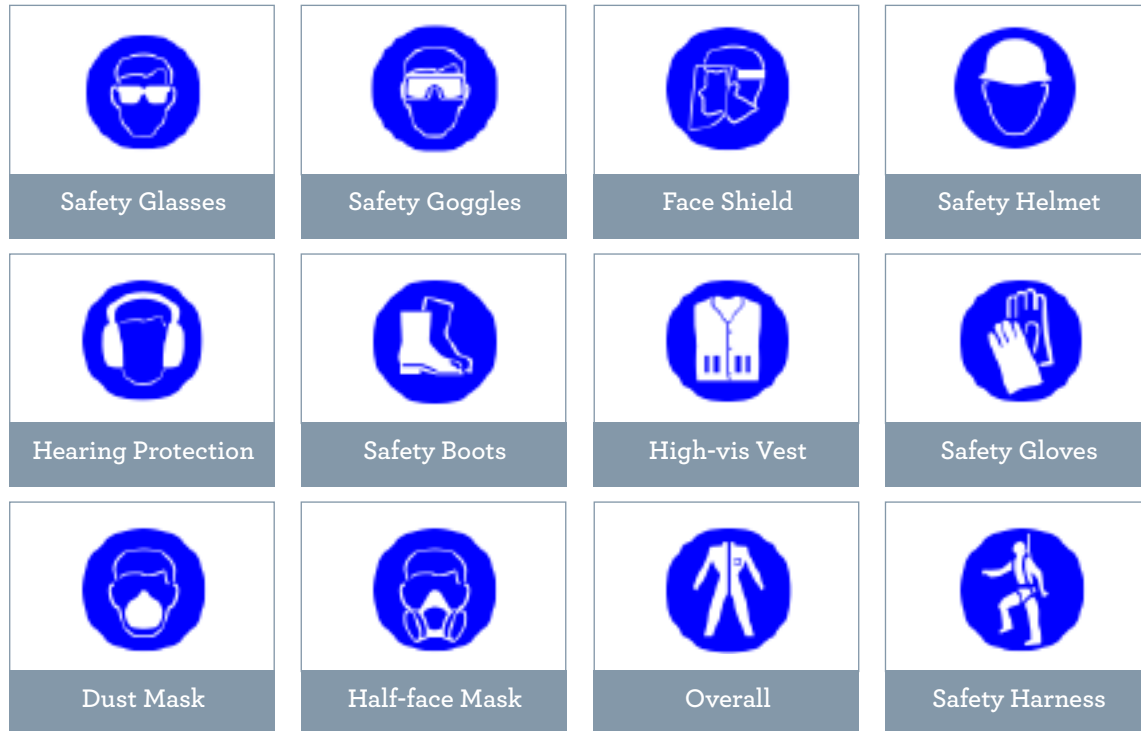
Management should regularly check the use of PPE and investigate fully any reasons for non-use. Supervision is vital to ensure PPE is properly used both on and off site. It is important that those with a supervisory role are also provided with adequate training and instructions so that they have the necessary skills to carry out the job. Spot checks are a useful way of monitoring how well PPE is used and corrective action can then be taken if spot checks reveal misuse.

PPE SAFETY SIGNS

Safety signs can be useful reminders to wear PPE. Below are examples of some of the safety signs indicating the type of PPE that MUST be worn.

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MAINTENANCE OF PPE

PPE must be well looked after and be carefully stored when not in use, e.g. kept in a dry, clean cupboard, or in the case of smaller items such as eye protection in a plastic box or case. The PPE should be kept clean and in good repair. Where applicable, the manufacturer's maintenance schedule (including recommended replacement periods) should be followed.

An effective maintenance system includes the following:

- Examination check for faults, damage, wear and tear, dirt etc.
- Testing to ensure PPE is operating as intended.
- Cleaning to include disinfection if appropriate.
- Repair.
- Replacement.

Simple maintenance can be carried out by a wearer having suitable training; however, more intricate

repairs should only be done by specialist personnel. A record should be kept of all maintenance carried out.

To avoid unnecessary loss of time or the risk of work being done without the necessary PPE, it is advisable that suitable replacement PPE should always be readily available to the worker.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- L25 Personal protective equipment at work (Second edition) – www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l25.pdf
- INDG174(rev2) Personal protective equipment (PPE) at work – a brief guide www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf

These documents are available to download free of charge from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/

APPENDIX 1 – PPE ISSUE RECORD

Completion of this form will enable managers to maintain a record of PPE for individual employees. Details of training (where applicable) are also included.

Name of employee issued with PPE

Job title

Item of PPE	Type	Date of Issue	Employee's Signature as Proof of Receipt and Understanding of Responsibility to Wear	Training Required	Re-Issue Dates (if issue is daily or freely accessible enter frequency or F/A)
Head Protection					
Hearing Protection					
Eye Protection					
Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)					
Overalls					
Gloves					
Footwear					
Safety Harness					
High Visibility Clothing					
Other (Specify)					

Members of staff are responsible for inspecting their own PPE before and after use; reporting any defects in their PPE; wearing PPE as instructed (either verbally or in writing); and storing their PPE appropriately.

Record maintained by (Line Manager)

Signature

APPENDIX 2 – PPE ASSESSMENT FORM

Task Assessed:	<input type="text"/>
Number of persons carrying out task:	<input type="text"/>
Date of Assessment:	<input type="text"/>
Person completing assessment:	<input type="text"/>

Is the following protection required?

1. Head Protection	Yes	No
Protection of the head in the event of a fall.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection of the head against falling objects or impact with fixed objects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection against striking fixed obstacles, scalping or entanglement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Eye Protection	Yes	No
Lateral protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total protection from all angles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full-face protection, but not enclosing the eyes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Foot Protection	Yes	No
Slip resistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oil resistant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shock resistant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heat resistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anti-static.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conductive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toecap reinforcement to prevent crushing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midsole reinforcement to prevent penetration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moulding or bonding of the sole and upper against separation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waterproof.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Hand and Arm Protection	Yes	No
Penetration and abrasion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thermal protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemical/ biological protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Hearing Protection	Yes	No
Noise levels exceeding 85 dB(A).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Respiratory Protection	Yes	No
Dusts and particulates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gases and vapours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asphyxiation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Protective Clothing for the Body	Yes	No
Low risk chemicals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strong solvents, oils and greases.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whole-body protection against chemicals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whole-body protection against vapour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Splash resistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fibres and dusts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping dry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping warm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection against specific equipment hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High visibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fall from height.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buoyancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Manufacture	Yes	No
Is the PPE manufactured to the correct CE, CEN/BS standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Condition	Yes	No
Is the PPE in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Storage	Yes	No
Are the storage facilities for PPE satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Training	Yes	No
Has training on how to use PPE been provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has refresher training been provided where necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To note: A competent person should carry out the assessment. Where an affirmative response is given then the action required should be stated below. After an action is completed, it should be signed off.

Actions Required	Completed by and date
Review by competent person/manager	

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