

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)



Health and Safety Guidance Note



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. Never allow exemptions from wearing PPE for those jobs that ‘only take a few minutes’. Employees also have a legal duty to co-operate with their employer and wear such equipment, report its loss or destruction, or any fault in it. 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. You need to consider:

- who is exposed and to what?
- how long are they exposed for?
- how much are they exposed to?.

A PPE needs checklist is included in Appendix 2 to help carry out the assessment.








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 following table, 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; face screens; visors. 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. Note: Make sure the eye protection chosen has the right combination of impact/dust/splash/molten metal eye protection for the task and fits the user properly.
	Head and Neck	Impact from falling or flying objects, risk of head bumping, hair getting tangled in machinery, chemical drips or splash, climate or temperature.	Industrial safety helmets, bump caps, hairnets and firefighters' helmets. Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some safety helmets incorporate or can be fitted with specially-designed eye or hearing protection Don't forget neck protection, e.g. scarves for use during welding Replace head protection if it is damaged.
	Breathing	Dust; vapour; gas; oxygen deficient atmospheres	Disposable face-masks or respirator; half/full face respirators; air-fed helmets; breathing apparatus Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The right type of respirator filter must be used as each is effective for only a limited range of substances Filters have only a limited life. Where there is a shortage of oxygen or any danger of losing consciousness due to exposure to high levels of harmful fumes, only use breathing apparatus - never use a filtering cartridge You will need to use breathing apparatus in a confined space or if there is a chance of an oxygen deficiency in the work area.
	Protecting the Body	Heat, chemical or metal splash, spray from pressure leaks or spray guns, contaminated dust, impact or penetration, 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; aprons; chemical suits Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of materials includes flame-retardant, anti-static, chain mail, chemically impermeable, and high-visibility Don't forget other protection, like safety harnesses or life jackets.
	Hands and Arms	Abrasion, temperature extremes, cuts and punctures, impact, chemicals, electric shock, radiation, vibration, biological agents and prolonged immersion in water	Gloves, gloves with a cuff, gauntlets and sleeving that covers part or all of the arm Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid gloves when operating machines such as bench drills where the gloves might get caught Some materials are quickly penetrated by chemicals - take care in selection, see HSE's skin at work website Barrier creams are unreliable and are no substitute for proper PPE Wearing gloves for long periods can make the skin hot and sweaty, leading to skin problems. Using separate cotton inner gloves can help prevent this.
	Feet and Legs	Wet, hot and cold conditions, electrostatic build-up, slipping, cuts and punctures, falling objects, heavy loads, metal and chemical splash, vehicles	Safety boots and shoes with protective toecaps and penetration-resistant, mid-sole wellington boots and specific footwear, e.g. foundry boots and chainsaw boots. Note: Footwear can have a variety of sole patterns and materials to help prevent slips in different conditions, including oil - or chemical-resistant soles. It can also be anti-static, electrically conductive or thermally insulating.
	Ears	Noise - a combination of sound level and duration of exposure, very high-level sounds are a hazard even with short duration	Earplugs, earmuffs, semi-insert/canal caps Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the right hearing protectors for the type of work, and make sure workers know how to fit them Choose protectors that reduce noise to an acceptable level, while allowing for safety and communication.

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

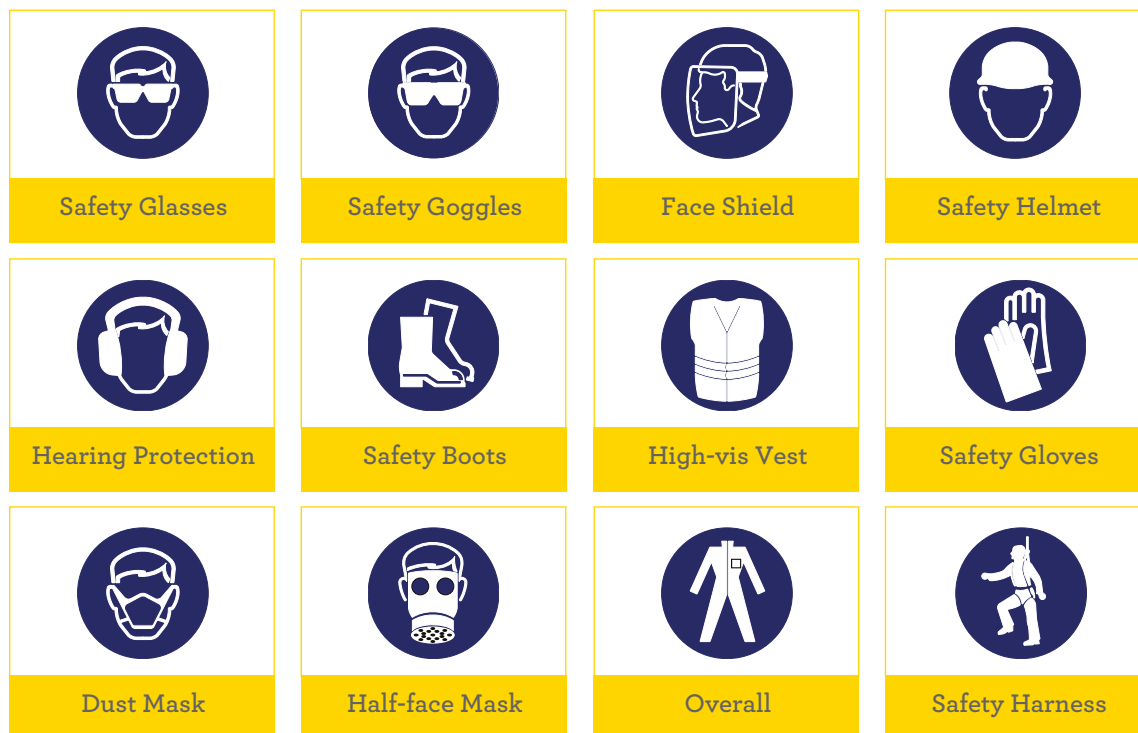
Management should regularly check the use of PPE and investigate fully any reasons for non-use. Supervision is vital to ensure PPE is properly used both on and off site. It is important that those with a supervisory role are also provided with adequate training and instructions so that they have the 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

- HSE Website: Risk at Work - Personal protective equipment (PPE)
www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/ppe.htm
- 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
- HSG53 Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg53.pdf

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

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

PPE NEEDS CHECKLIST

Task:

Number of persons carrying out task:

Date:

Person completing checklist:

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

- Low risk chemicals.
- Strong solvents, oils and greases.
- Whole-body protection against chemicals.
- Whole-body protection against vapour.
- Splash resistance.
- Fibres and dusts.
- Keeping dry.
- Keeping warm.
- Protection against specific equipment hazards.
- High visibility.
- Fall from height.
- Buoyancy.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Manufacture

Is the PPE manufactured to the correct CE, CEN/BS standard?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Condition

Is the PPE in good condition?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Storage

Are the storage facilities for PPE satisfactory?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Training

Has training on how to use PPE been provided?

Has refresher training been provided where necessary?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To note: A competent person should complete the checklist. 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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