

S22 – Opening Statement

Personal Protective Equipment

Yearly statistics of mortal and major work accidents explain the importance of protection and prevention. Employers have a responsibility to provide and make use of personal protective equipment (PPE) wherever there is a risk to the health and safety of employees that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways. The main piece of legislation pertaining to all equipment (worn or held) including clothing affording protection against the weather, is the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992.

PPE consists primarily of safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. The PPE procedure offers a more exhaustive list. Crash helmets and cycle helmets worn by employees on the road are not included as these are covered by road traffic legislation.

The HSE recommends that any purchased PPE is 'CE' marked and complies with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002. The CE marking signifies that the PPE satisfies certain basic safety requirements and may have been tested and certified by an independent body. Suppliers can give guidance on the types of PPE available and their suitability for different tasks.

In order to determine which types of PPE are required it is necessary to perform an assessment of the types of hazard presented by the workplace. The PPE procedure is a comprehensive guide for the responsible manager, whose duty it is to assess the suitability of PPE both for the work to be undertaken and for the employee involved. Employers must absorb the cost of PPE, however if an ex-employee fails to return items issued to him or her then the money can be deducted from any wages owed.



S22 – Personal Protective Equipment

What is this?

This is a written procedure which covers all aspects of personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements within the workplace.

The person responsible for implementing this procedure is:

What do we need to do?

The person responsible for implementing this procedure must ensure that:

- Identify what PPE is required and implement a scheme specifying the type of equipment that will be used;
 - Consult with employees and their representatives on the scheme;
 - Ensure Personal Protective Equipment is issued to employees on all activities that have been identified through a risk assessment;
 - Absorb the cost of any PPE issued to employees for their protection whilst at work;
 - Ensure that information and training is provided to employees on the correct use of PPE;
 - Provide suitable accommodation for the storage of PPE when it is not being used;
 - Ensure that any mislaid, damaged or defective equipment is replaced immediately;
 - Keep records of any PPE that has been issued to employees.
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What do employees have to do?

Employees who are issued PPE by the employer must:

- Wear it;
 - Acknowledge they have received the PPE by completing an issue form;
 - Maintain it and ensure it is kept in a good condition;
 - Report any losses, defects or damages to their supervisor immediately.
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Contractors and visitors

Contractors should provide their own PPE but provision should be made for visitors. A selection of PPE should be readily available for visitors who wish to take a tour of the site.

Risk assessment

The hierarchy of control measures states that PPE should only be issued as a 'last resort'. The focus should be placed on eliminating the hazard at source through a series of design modifications. If this cannot be achieved then the implementation of engineering controls or the introduction of safe systems of work should be considered.



Types of PPE

There are various types of PPE including:

- Head protection (hard hats, bump caps, crash helmets);
 - Ear protection (ear defenders, ear plugs);
 - Eye and face protection (safety spectacles, eyeshields, safety goggles, faceshields);
 - Respiratory protection (disposable masks, breathing apparatus);
 - Hand and arm protection (for manual handling, vibration, chemical, outdoor work, electrical work);
 - Protective footwear (safety boots or shoes, Wellington boots);
 - Protective clothing (high visibility clothing, overalls, flame retardant overalls, aprons, waterproofs);
 - Safety harnesses (fall arrest, fall restraint).
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PPE requirements

All PPE must:

- Be readily available;
 - Be Issued personally (it is not advised that PPE is shared);
 - Bear the CE stamp of conformity;
 - Be compatible with the person using it;
 - Be compatible with any other equipment being used;
 - Be comfortable and durable;
 - Be used by persons who have received adequate information and training in its use;
 - Not be worn if the risk caused by wearing it is greater than the risk against which it is meant to protect;
 - Be maintained and adequately stored.
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Legislation

- Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
- The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992
- Noise at Work Regulations 2005
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002
- The Control of Asbestos 2002

This list is by no means exhaustive but identifies some of the key pieces of legislation associated with PPE.

Associated documentation

- Personal Protective Equipment register H&SPPE01

