



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) POLICY

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 as amended 2002 defines PPE as *all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather where adverse climatic conditions could affect a persons health and safety) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects him against one or more risks to his health and safety .*

Because the effectiveness of PPE can be easily compromised, e.g. by not being used, it should only be supplied as a last resort and only once all other reasonably practicable control measures have been introduced.

If the risk assessment for a particular task or tasks has identified that, even with other safety measures in place the residual risk is still unacceptable, then PPE must be issued to all employees who are, or could potentially be, affected by the hazard.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT MUST BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE!

The following questions should be considered when assessing the suitability of the personal protective equipment:

- Is the PPE appropriate for the conditions of use and the associated risk for example, light gloves use in general cleaning would not be suitable for collecting of sharps.
- Will the residual risk be adequately controlled without the overall risk being increased, for example safety goggles not affecting the operatives line of sight
- Can the equipment be adjusted to fit the individual
- Will the PPE adversely affect people with certain health issues for examples dust masks being worn by asthmatics
- How will the demands of the job affect the selection of PPE, for example for heavy work in hot environments, can light weight PPE be provided.
- If multiple PPE is required i.e. safety spectacles, mask and a hard hat, are they all compatible with each other.

Once a decision has been made on the most appropriate type of PPE, employers must also provide the staff with suitable instruction / training, to include:

- Why the PPE is required
- How to use it correctly and in what situation
- When it should be replaced or repaired
- What are its limitations

Once an employee has been provided with the equipment and has received the appropriate level of training in its use, they must take care of the equipment and ensure it is worn / used in line with the instructions provided and any on site requirements.

If due to the nature of the working environment the PPE becomes soiled and/or damaged, it is the employer's responsibility to get it cleaned and/or repaired/replaced. The manufacturer's maintenance schedules, recommended replacement periods and shelf lives should be followed.

Self-employed persons also have a duty to obtain and use the appropriate PPE wherever there is a risk to their health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled by alternative measures.

Issue records are the best way of recording both receipt of the equipment and that the employee concerned has received the appropriate instruction / training in their use.

Although the regulations do not make a documented record mandatory, it is the simplest way for an employer to prove compliance with the law.

(A sample record sheet can be found in Appendix One)

Personal protective equipment is, if used in conjunction with other safe systems, an efficient tool in reducing injuries at work. Employers need to stress to employees the importance of PPE and what the consequences are of not complying with the law.

Ref: A Short Guide to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
INDG174

Further reading:

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. Guidance on Regulations
L25 HSE Books 1992 ISBN 0 7176 0415 2

The selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment: A practical
guide HSG53 HSE Books 1998 ISBN 0 7176 1537 5

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Wood', written in a cursive style.

Ashley Wood
Managing Director

