

# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

(See also: [COSHH\(19\)](#); [Respiratory Protective Equipment\(66\)](#))

## INTRODUCTION

Personal protective equipment (PPE) means all equipment (including clothing giving protection against the weather) which is worn or held to protect against risks to health or safety. The main legislation governing PPE at work is the **Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992**. PPE includes the following, when worn for health and safety protection:-

- (a) protective **clothing** (e.g., aprons, gloves, footwear, helmets, high visibility waistcoats)
- (b) protective **equipment** (e.g., eye protectors, respirators, safety harnesses).

In practice, however, the PPE Regulations will not apply to ear protectors, most respiratory protective equipment and some other types of PPE as these are specifically excluded from the scope of the PPE Regulations because they are covered by existing regulations (e.g., Noise at Work Regulations 1989, Control of Asbestos at Work Regs 1987, COSHH 1998).

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Provision** of PPE: Employers must ensure that suitable PPE is provided to employees exposed to a risk to their health or safety except where the risk has been adequately controlled by other equally, or more effective means. 'Suitability' is by reference to:

- being appropriate to the risks and workplace conditions.
- the ergonomics and state of health of the person
- being capable of fitting the wearer correctly
- being effective in preventing or adequately controlling the risk without increasing an overall risk.
- complying with any other provision implementing any PPE EC Directive.

PPE should be seen as a last resort in the hierarchy of control measures; it should be made readily available (in most cases on a personal basis); no charge can be levied; ergonomic factors should be considered i.e., match the PPE to the person; quality must be ensured i.e., to be certified ('CE' marked) as meeting basic safety requirements.

2. **Compatibility of PPE:** This is required where more than one piece of PPE is worn.

3. **Assessment** is needed to ensure the suitability of the PPE to be provided. This should include assessment of the risks, the PPE risk protection characteristics and a comparison of PPE available. It should follow on from, but not duplicate, risk assessments carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
4. **Maintenance and Replacement:** PPE should be maintained (including replaced or cleaned as appropriate) in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair. Responsibilities, procedures (including frequencies) should be established and appropriate records kept.
5. **Accommodation:** Suitable accommodation must be provided for the safe storage of PPE. Contaminated or defective PPE should also be segregated.
6. **Information, instruction and training** needs to be provided in a systematic way; it should cover users, managers/supervisors and repair/maintenance/test personnel. Records should be kept. Training to be both theoretical and practical, induction and refresher as necessary.
7. **Use of PPE:** There are duties on employers, self-employed persons and employees to ensure the proper use of PPE.
8. **Reporting of loss/defect** - to the employer.

### **PRACTICAL GUIDANCE**

Part 2 of booklet L25 - 'Guidance on Regulations - The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992' contains detailed advice and references on the selection, use and maintenance of PPE widely used in industry. The following table is a summary only of the advice. Details on more specialised equipment can be found in the References/Further Details section.

<b>Body Part Protected</b>	<b>Types of Protection</b>	<b>Processes and Activities (Examples)</b>	<b>Selection (Comments)</b>	<b>Maintenance (Advice)</b>
HEAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crash/riding helmets</li> <li>• Safety helmets</li> <li>• Bump caps</li> <li>• Other caps (entanglement protection)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction/building work</li> <li>• Work near hoists, etc</li> <li>• Tree felling</li> <li>• Potential for objects falling from height</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate shell size with adjustable strap</li> <li>• Compatibility with conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not stored in direct sunlight or hot/humid conditions</li> <li>• Visual inspections</li> <li>• Cleansing of sweat bands, etc</li> <li>• If damaged or deteriorates, replace</li> </ul>
EYES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety spectacles</li> <li>• Eyeshields</li> <li>• Goggles</li> <li>• Welding, ie. filters, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chemicals</li> <li>• Powered tools</li> <li>• Welding</li> <li>• Gases under pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety spectacles: light, appropriate style, lateral protection</li> <li>• Safety goggles: heavier, possible less convenient but more all round cover, more prone to misting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning of lenses</li> <li>• Replace if scratched or pitted</li> <li>• Personal issue</li> </ul>
FEET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety boots or shoes</li> <li>• Safety wellingtons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Mechanical or manual handling</li> <li>• Thermal</li> <li>• Chemical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soles - slip/chemical resistance</li> <li>• Heat resistance</li> <li>• Waterproof?</li> <li>• Electrical hazards?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Protective covering maintenance</li> <li>• Discard/dispose of worn or deteriorated items</li> </ul>
HANDS/ ARMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection against cuts, abrasion, temperature, skin irritation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual handling (NB. entanglement danger near machinery)</li> <li>• Vibration eg. chainsaws</li> <li>• Outdoor work</li> <li>• Thermal</li> <li>• Chemical, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of protection required against:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- penetration/abrasion</li> <li>- thermal conditions</li> <li>- fire</li> <li>- chemicals</li> <li>- general use</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Regular checking and discard if worn or deteriorated</li> <li>• Minimise contact with chemicals</li> </ul>
BODY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overalls, aprons, etc.</li> <li>• Thermal outfits</li> <li>• Physical (eg. machinery)</li> <li>• Visibility</li> <li>• Life jackets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction/outdoor work</li> <li>• Cold stores</li> <li>• Food processing</li> <li>• Welding</li> <li>• Agricultural eg. chainsaw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate protection against chemicals and hazardous substances including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low risk chemicals</li> <li>- strong solvents, oils and greases</li> <li>- fibres and dusts, etc</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate maintenance, checking and discard if damaged.</li> </ul>

## **CHECKLIST - PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

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|----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Is PPE that is not covered by other specific existing legislation required for work at your premises?                               | YES | NO |
| 2. | Can processes or activities be changed to eliminate the need for PPE?   | YES | NO |
| 3. | Have you assessed the PPE requirement to ensure that suitable PPE is selected and provided?   | YES | NO |
| 4. | Where more than one piece of PPE is worn, do you take steps to ensure compatibility?  | YES | NO |
| 5. | Does the PPE comply with UK legislation implementing EC directives concerning design and manufacture of PPE (i.e. is it CE marked?) | YES | NO |
| 6. | Do you have a system of maintenance and replacement for PPE, and appropriate record keeping?  | YES | NO |
| 7. | Is suitable accommodation provided for PPE?   | YES | NO |
| 8. | Do you provide systematic information, instruction and training on PPE for employees?   | YES | NO |
| 9. | Do you have a PPE loss/defect reporting system?   | YES | NO |

### **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

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## REFERENCE/FURTHER DETAILS

- \*1. Booklet L25 - Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 (HSE) ISBN 0-7176-04152(£5.75)
- \*2. The Selection, Use and Maintenance of Respiratory Protective Equipment- A Practical Guide (HSE) (1998)(ISBN 0-7176-1537-5) (£9.50)
- \*3. Control of Lead at Work - ACoP (HSE) ISBN 0-11-883780-X
- \*4. Booklet L5 - General & Carcinogens COSHH ACoPs (HSE) ISBN 0-7176-1670-3
- \*5. Construction (Head Protection) Regulations - Guidance on Regulations (HSE) ISBN 0-11-885503-4
- \*\*6. Leaflet IND(G)174. A Short Guide to the PPE at Work Regulations 1992.(1995) (ISBN 07176 08891)  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf)
- \*\*7. Leaflet IND(G)330. Selecting protective gloves for work with chemicals. [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg330.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg330.pdf)

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- \* Available to view by prior arrangement at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Environmental Health Services, Council House, Coton Road, Nuneaton. CV11 5AA
  - \*\* Free copy available from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council at the above address.