

## Relevant Legislation

*The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002*

*The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended)*

*The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)*

*The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005*

## Definition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is a term that covers all equipment that is intended to be worn or held by employees and which protects them against one or more risks to their health and safety. Such equipment includes:

- safety footwear
- high visibility waistcoats
- gloves
- protective clothing for adverse weather conditions
- safety harnesses

The above list is not exhaustive.

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.

### **Other regulations**

The PPE at Work Regulations do not apply where the following sets of regulations require the provision and use of PPE against these hazards. For example, gloves used to prevent dangerous chemicals penetrating the skin would be covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002 (as amended). The regulations are:

- The Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002
- The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999
- The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

## Risk Assessment

PPE should only be used where the risk cannot be controlled by something equally or more effective. Engineering controls or safe systems of work should always be considered first. This is because PPE protects only the person wearing it, whereas measures controlling the risk at source can protect everyone. Additionally, effective protection is achieved only by suitable PPE, correctly fitted and maintained and properly used. Furthermore, if more than one item of PPE is being worn, the different items of PPE must be compatible with each other. Lastly, PPE may restrict the wearer to some extent by limiting mobility or visibility, or by requiring additional weight to be carried.

The need for PPE should be identified as part of a risk assessment. This should take into account the particular risks involved and for the circumstances of its use. PPE need not be provided where risks are sufficiently low that they can be considered adequately controlled. The need for voluntary workers and school children to wear PPE should also be assessed.

Whilst most PPE will be provided on a personal basis, some may be used by a number of people. Furthermore, it may be appropriate, to provide a supply of disposable PPE (for example single use coveralls) which can simply be discarded after use.

Once it has been decided that PPE is necessary, suitable items should be selected. These should comply with the appropriate British or European Standard.

## Information and Training for Users

Users need to be given information, instruction and training to enable them to make effective use of the PPE provided. In other words, they should be trained in the correct use of the PPE, how to fit and wear it correctly, and what its limitations are. The extent of the instruction and training will vary with the complexity and performance of the equipment. Users may need refresher training from time to time.

The training should include elements of theory as well as practice in using the equipment, and should be carried out in accordance with the recommendations and instructions supplied by the manufacturer.

## Theoretical Training

Theoretical training needs to take full account of the following:

- An explanation of the risks present and why PPE is needed
- The operation, performance and limitations of the equipment

- Instructions on the selection, use and storage of PPE related to the intended use. Written operating procedures such as permits to work involving PPE should be explained
- Recognising defects in PPE and arrangements for reporting loss or defects.
- Factors which can affect the protection provided by the PPE such as:
  - other protective equipment
  - personal factors
  - working conditions
  - inadequate fitting
  - defects
  - damage and wear

## Practical Training

Practical training needs to take full account of the following:

- Practice in putting on, wearing and removing the equipment
- Practice and instruction in inspection and, where appropriate, testing of the PPE before use
- Practice and instruction in the maintenance that can be undertaken by the user, such as cleaning and replacement of certain components
- Instruction in the safe storage of equipment.

Furthermore, employees must also be given clear instructions in how they can obtain PPE. If disposable PPE is used, it is important that users are told when it should be discarded and replaced.

## Duties of Employees

Where protective clothing is issued or its use is required, it must be worn and maintained in accordance with the instructions given by the employer. PPE should be examined before it is put on and should not be worn if it is defective or has not been cleaned. Any defects or loss of protective equipment should be reported to the appropriate manager as soon as possible. Each employee should take reasonable care not to misuse or neglect to use PPE. If employees have any concerns about the serviceability of the PPE they should contact their manager.

## Maintenance

A system of maintenance is needed to ensure that the PPE continues to provide the degree of protection for which it was designed. Maintenance includes:

- Cleaning
- Disinfection
- Examination
- Replacement
- Repair and testing.

The responsibility for maintenance must be laid down together with the details of the procedures to be followed and their frequency. The maintenance programme will vary with the type of equipment and the use to which it is put. Manufacturers' maintenance schedules and instructions should normally be followed.

## Accommodation

Suitable storage arrangement for PPE should be provided. Accommodation for PPE is needed to ensure that it is protected from contamination, loss or damage by (for example) harmful substances, damp or sunlight. PPE used by peripatetic workers can be stored in suitable containers or areas in the vehicle. The accommodation does not need to be fixed. The user, for example, can keep safety spectacles in a suitable carrying case.

## Record Keeping

The managers should keep records. This should include a risk assessment identifying the tasks where PPE is needed. Records should also be kept when PPE is issued and the relevant instructions relating to it should also be issued. These should include the specification of the PPE that has been provided and the date of issue. Management should also keep maintenance and training records.

## Arrangements within Children's Services

Many activities undertaken in schools can be hazardous. As indicated earlier, the principal measure to reduce risk is to control the hazard at source by engineering means, where possible. However, it is accepted that sometimes this will not be possible and in such cases (and as last resort) PPE will be required.

There are several teaching activities that will require the provision of PPE to staff. It is important that where a risk assessment identifies the need for PPE, such equipment must be suitable and sufficient for its purpose. This means that often it will have to comply fully with a British or European Standard. For Science and Design & Technology, CLEAPSS has produced guidance that can be accessed by schools. In particular, the following documents may be of interest - R135 – 'Eye and Face Protection' and PS50 'Gloves as Personal Protective Equipment'. These give comprehensive information about the PPE available and the standards that should be observed.

In the case of Design and Technology it is likely that staff will require ear defenders and high protection dust masks. When machining materials for use by students, staff should refer to the generic risk assessments.

Suitable PPE must be available to students for many activities that take place in Design & Technology, Science and Art (for example eye protection and aprons). Where students are expected to provide their own PPE, such as shin pads for football lessons, then the school should consider purchasing a supply in the event that students forget to bring their own.

Where schools buy in to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with Janitorial and / or Catering Services, then that service will determine, by risk assessment, the appropriate PPE required. The school will have to then purchase the appropriate PPE and ensure that records are maintained of issue, training and maintenance.

Schools that do not opt into the above services, and elect to manage these themselves, must undertake risk assessments to identify the appropriate PPE required as well as provide suitable PPE to their staff and maintain records of issue, training and maintenance. Where a school uses the services of a contractor then they must ensure that the service provider has undertaken a risk assessment and be clear as to whether the contractor or the school are responsible for issuing the appropriate PPE.

---

**The Corporate Health and Safety Team are available to provide further guidance and advice on any proposed procedures.**