

CORPORATE POLICY

ON

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**Resources Directorate
Personnel Services
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STATEMENT OF POLICY
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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STATEMENT OF POLICY

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (P. P. E.)

1.0 Introduction

This policy statement has been produced in response to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992.

These Regulations elaborate and enforce the general legislation.

2.0 What is P.P.E.?

Put simply, P.P.E. is any piece of protective equipment that is worn at work to help protect people from hazards. The hazards that it can protect against are diverse, but typical examples might include:-

- Injuries to the head or feet - e.g. due to falling objects;
- Injuries to the lungs - perhaps from breathing in contaminated air;
- Injuries to the eyes - perhaps from flying particles or splashes from dangerous liquids; and
- Injuries to the hands - e.g. when handling sharp objects.

However, **P.P.E. is not a solution to safety needs and should only be used as a last resort.** In fact, the law states that the first defence against danger must always be a safe system of work.

There is a hierarchy of control you should try to follow:

- Eliminate - stop using the substance, machinery etc
- Substitute - use less hazardous one/method etc
- Enclose - surround the problem
- Isolate - either the substance, piece of equipment etc or the user
- Contain - limit the risk if it does arise
- Ventilate - take the risk away
- Reduce - the number of employees exposed, or time they are exposed
- Clean - remove contamination
- Personal protective equipment - mask respirators, goggles, gloves etc

All controls must be monitored for effectiveness and will need to be checked, inspected and maintained – for instance, local exhaust ventilation must be tested every 14 months.

3. What the law requires

There are a number of Regulations that cover the provision and use of P.P.E. in the workplace - these include the Noise at Work Regulations 1989 (which requires the use of hearing protection when noise reach certain levels and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994 (COSHH) which require respiratory protection to be provided whenever exposure to hazardous substances at work cannot be prevented or controlled.

Another major set of regulations covering the provision and the use of P.P.E. are the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. These Regulations came into force in January 1993 and brought most types of P.P.E. under the umbrella of a single set of Regulations for the first time. In short, they require that suitable personal protection equipment is supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled by any other means.

4.0 General Statement

P.P.E. must be provided when the risk presented by the work cannot be adequately controlled by other means. All reasonable steps must be taken to secure the health, safety and welfare of employees who work with P.P.E.

While it is generally recognised that the use of P.P.E. can be undertaken without undue risks to health, where it is found that employees have genuine reservation and concern about the use of P.P.E. then training must be given and information provided to enable better understanding of the issues. In all cases instruction must be given in the use and maintenance of PPE.

The responsibility for implementing the provision of this policy and the preparation of a departmental strategy rests with each Director where there are issues common to directorates, guidance will be prepared corporately to assist Directors in implementing this policy.

5.0 Wet Weather Clothing

Wet weather clothing also falls within the general umbrella of the PPE Regulations/Health and Safety At Work Act, and any risk assessment must address this area. Corporate guidelines to be issued at a later date will cover the general principles that need to be taken into account.

6.0 Arrangements for securing the health and safety of employees

Each Directorate must:-

- (a) carry out a Risk Assessment to identify any hazards that are present in the job or task before the work begins.
- (b) take any necessary measures to remedy any risks found as a result of the assessment
- (b) when eliminating and controlling risks, the specific hierarchy of control measures must be followed. See (2).
- (c) ensure where two (or more) items of P.P.E. are used simultaneously that these are compatible and are as effective used together as they are separately
- (d) arrange for adequate accommodation for correct storage of the P.P.E.
- (e) implement steps for the maintenance, cleaning and repair of the P.P.E.
- (f) train staff in the safe use of P.P.E. for all risks

- (g) replace as necessary P.P.E. which has been provided to meet a statutory obligation and at no cost to the employee (i) inform every employee of the risks which exist
- (j) re-assess as necessary if the substances used or the work processes change
- (k) make arrangements to ensure that employees can report the loss of or defects in P.P.E.
- (l) regularly monitor /audit the use of PPE within the Directorate to ensure that it is being used correctly and that the above steps are carried out. Employees found to be not wearing/using PPE as directed should be re-educated on its use and warned that subsequent failure to use PPE as directed may lead to disciplinary action.

Appendix 'A' attached gives general guidance on the main duties of the employer and the employee under the Regulations.

7.0 Selection and Comfort of PPE

When selecting PPE to be used while doing a job, the nature of the job and the demands it places on the worker should be taken into account. Those who do the job are usually best placed to know what is involved, and they should be consulted. The aim should always be to choose PPE which will give maximum comfort to the wearer, as uncomfortable equipment is unlikely to be worn properly, if at all.

8.0 Procedures for dealing with health and safe issues

Where an employee raises a matter related to health and safety in the use of P.P.E. you must:-

- (a) take all necessary steps to investigate the circumstances.
- (b) take corrective measures where appropriate
- (c) advise the employee of the action taken

Where a problem arises in the use of P.P.E. the employee must:-

- (a) inform a responsible person immediately
- (b) in the case of an adverse health condition advise the supervisor and general practitioner

9.0 Training

Users must be made aware of why P.P.E. is needed, when it is to be used, repaired or replaced and its limitations. Instruction, training and be supervised must be given in its use. As P.P.E. is the last resort after other methods of protection have been considered, it is important that users wear it all the time they are exposed to the risk. There should be no exemptions for those jobs which take 'just a few minutes'. The use of P.P.E. must be checked regularly and any reasons for non-use fully investigated. Safety signs should be used as useful reminders to wear P.P.E. These should comply with the Health and Safety (Safety, Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

10.0 **Maintenance**

All equipment must be well looked after and be properly accommodated when not in use, for example stored in a dry, clean cupboard or, in the case of smaller items such as eye protection, in a box or case. P.P.E. should be kept clean and in good repair. The manufacturer's maintenance schedule (including recommended replacement periods and shelf lives) should be followed. Simple maintenance can be carried out by the trained wearer, but more intricate repairs should only be done by specialist personnel.

To avoid unnecessary loss of time and to ensure the safety of the wearer, it is advisable that suitable replacement P.P.E. should be readily available.

11.0 **New P.P.E.**

From 1 July 1995, new P.P.E. will need to be 'CE' marked in accordance with the requirements of the amended Personal Protective Equipment (EC Directive) Regulations 1992. The CE mark signifies that the P.P.E. satisfies certain basic safety requirements and in most cases will have been tested and certified by an independent body.

Existing non-CE marked PPE can be used after 30 June 1995 providing it still offers adequate protection.

12.0 **Record keeping**

The following records should be kept:-

1. The results of the P.P.E. assessment.
2. Actions taken as a result of P.P.E. assessment.
3. Inventory of P.P.E. equipment and to whom each item has been supplied.
4. The provision of training.
5. Information given to employees.
6. Complaints or alleged reports of discomfort, or non-suitability of the P.P.E. discovered following field tests or surveys
7. Action taken in respect of such complaints.
8. Manufacturers advice with regard to compatibility of various items of P.P.E. which are used together.
9. Replacement of P.P.E. (with dates).
10. Maintenance and testing of P.P.E. equipment.
11. P.P.E. given as a personal issue.

13.0 **Other Regulations**

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations do not apply where P.P.E. is provided under six sets of existing regulations. These Regulations already require the use of some types of P.P.E. to protect against certain risks, for example the Noise at Work Regulations require the use of hearing protection where necessary. The six sets of Regulations are:-

- the Control of Lead at Work Regulations 1980
- the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985
- the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 1987
- the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994
- the Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989
- the Noise at Work Regulations 1989

14.0 **Advice**

Advice on the requirements of the policy can be obtained from the Council's Health and Welfare Officer, Safety Personnel Services, Ystrad Fawr, Ystrad Mynach, Telephone 01443 863093.

15.0 **Main Legislation**

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
Health and Safety (Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992

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Where danger persists, after steps have been taken to prevent or control risks to safety and health in accordance with other legislation, suitable PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) must be used.

The provision, selection and use of PPE is subject to the following conditions and duties which concern both employer and employee.

Provision of PPE

PPE must

- be regarded as a last resort against risks
- be appropriate for the risk protected against
- take account of ergonomics fit correctly
- introduce no new/increased risk through its use

Quality of PPE

PPE must conform with statutory requirements, i.e.

- bear CE mark
- OR
- meet with the assessment requirements in accordance with the regulations and where necessary, continue to receive HSE approval

Risk assessment and selection of suitable PPE

Employers should

- consult with users in selecting and specifying equipment
- consider workplace risks
- consider demands of the job/physical effort
- seek medical advice in cases of individual wearer problems

Maintenance and replacement of PPE

Employers must

- ensure that PPE is in good working order when issued
- where appropriate, provide for cleaning, disinfecting, examining, repair, testing and record keeping
- follow manufacturers, maintenance schedules and instructions; any departure from them being discussed beforehand
- ensure intricate repairs are carried out only by trained personnel
- carry a sufficient stock of spare parts made available to wearers

Accommodation for PPE

Employers must

- provide safe storage of PPE when it is not in use
- ensure segregation of equipment stored for repair and equipment stored awaiting re-issue

Information, instruction and training

Employers must

- inform users of risks present and why PPE is needed
- instruct/train on operation, performance and limitations of the PPE provided
- instruct/train on selection use and storage of PPE
- instruct/train on factors which may affect the protection provided and provide refresher training as necessary

It is advisable to keep records of training details

Use of PPE

Employers must

- take all reasonable steps to ensure that PPE is properly used

Employees must

- make full and proper use of the PPE provided
- when not in use, store PPE in the accommodation provided

Duties of employees

Employees must

- take reasonable care of the PPE provided
- immediately report loss of, or defect in, the PPE
- consult employer in the event of any concern regarding serviceability of PPE

Charging for the use of PPE

No charge shall be levied for the use of PPE provided, unless:-

- the employee wishes to use the equipment whilst not at work, and
- a the employer permits such use, in which case, the employer may ask the employee to make a contribution reflecting a reasonable reimbursement of cost incurred through additional wear and tear

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