

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Today's Topic/Issue

It is important that you always have the correct PPE; that it fits you correctly and works with any other forms of PPE you may be using (e.g. goggles and earmuffs might not always fit when worn at the same time), and that PPE is clean and well maintained.

Whilst PPE is the last defence that actively prevents the wearer from getting hurt, independent reporting shows that up to **50% of workers reported improper PPE fit, 43% found PPE uncomfortable, and 38% admitted using workarounds.**

QUICK QUIZ

What incidents and injuries could be prevented by wearing correct PPE?

Why Wear PPE?

- To protect yourself from injuries and illness
- To protect others from injury
- To make yourself visible to others
- To ensure you go home safely
- Reduce the risk of trauma to your colleagues
- To set a good example for less experienced staff or visitors



Different Forms of PPE



**Ear protection
must be worn**

Ear protection is used to prevent exposure to high levels or long durations of sound which can cause damage to your hearing.

Your eyes can be affected by a range of things such as chemical or fluid splash, dust or other particles in the air as well as harmful gases or vapour.



**Eye protection
must be worn**



Wear gloves

Workers should wear protective gloves when their hands are at risk of injury, contamination, or harm from the task or environment.



**Protective
footwear must
be worn**

Protective footwear protects from foot injury by enabling toe protection, slip-resistance, heat resistance or ankle support.



**High visibility
clothing must
be worn**

Wherever there are moving vehicles or machinery, it is essential that everyone can be seen.



**Head protection
must be worn**

Head protection (usually safety helmets/hard hats) is needed wherever there is a foreseeable risk of head injury.

QUICK QUIZ TWO

How do you know what PPE is required for the environment you are in or task you are completing?



Maintenance

Before Using:

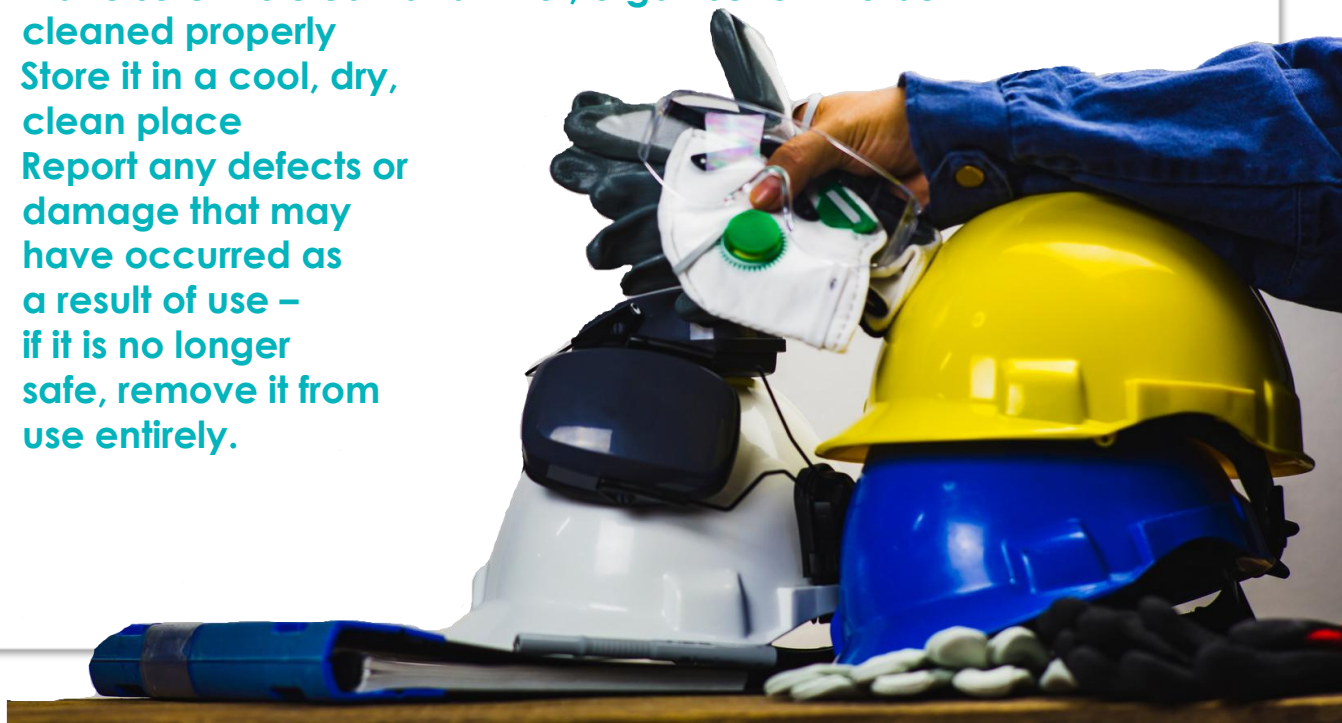
- Check you are only using PPE allocated to you
- Check you know how to properly wear and use the PPE
- Follow any training you have been given on the PPE use

Before Wearing:

- Make sure there are no signs of wear or tear that may reduce its ability to keep you safe
- Check the PPE is clean

After Using:

- Make sure it is clean and if not, organise for it to be cleaned properly
- Store it in a cool, dry, clean place
- Report any defects or damage that may have occurred as a result of use – if it is no longer safe, remove it from use entirely.



REMEMBER

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure the correct PPE is available, but it is the employee's responsibility to keep it well maintained and report if it is lost, damaged or faulty.



Today's Topic/Issue

PPE serves as a crucial **last line of defence** in mitigating workplace hazards, but it should not be the sole reliance for ensuring worker safety. Effective risk management begins with thorough risk assessments and the implementation of physical control measures wherever feasible. When PPE is necessary, selecting the appropriate equipment and ensuring proper training and maintenance are essential to its effectiveness.

QUICK QUIZ- “What incidents and injuries could be prevented by wearing correct PPE?”

- Healthcare workers could be exposed to harmful bacteria and viruses if they don't have the proper PPE. Some healthcare workers may need masks, respirators, aprons and eye protection depending on their role.
- Without welding protection garments, welders are at serious risk of severe burns and other injuries.
- Arc flash injuries can cause burns, blast injuries, hearing damage and the inhalation of toxic smoke for electrical workers who don't have the right PPE. Arc flash protective workwear uses fabrics that limit the spread of flames and protects against the risk of second- and third-degree burns.
- Anti-static/ESD garments are also essential for electrical workers or workers in any industry where electrostatic discharge presents a threat.
- Without high-visibility workwear, employees on industrial and construction sites are at risk of being injured by machinery and vehicles if the operators are unable to see them clearly.
- A lack of adequate hand protection and chemical-resistant clothing will increase the risk of cuts and exposure to harmful substances in the workplace, leading to various diseases, disabilities, skin irritation, lacerations, infections, burns and long-term issues like chronic illness, cancer, scarring and disfigurement.
- Workers on construction sites and in factories, welding shops and warehouses must have protective headgear to prevent serious head injuries from falling objects. Foot injuries can also be very common in these settings due to slippery surfaces, falling objects, and collisions with sharp objects, which is why steel-toe boots and other types of safety boots are needed to prevent serious injuries and long-term mobility issues.



Once a risk assessment determines that a PPE control measure is necessary, it is important to choose PPE that is appropriate for the hazard. HSE Legislation require that employers supply PPE that meets a certain standard. It is important to choose PPE that fits well and, where multiple items of PPE are worn together, that they do not impede one another. For example, where safety goggles and hard-hats are worn at the same time, it is important that each fits well. Some forms of PPE can actually increase risk depending on the tasks, for example:

Gloves **should not** be worn if they:

- increase the risk of entanglement (e.g. near rotating machinery)
- reduce grip or dexterity where precision is critical
- give a false sense of safety instead of proper controls
- This is why glove use should always come from a **task-specific risk assessment**, not habit.

QUICK QUIZ

How do you know what PPE is required for the environment you are in or task you are completing?

- Always start with the risk assessment as the primary source – this will identify the key hazards and the specific PPE required to control the risks once all other controls are applied.
- Method Statements or Safe Systems of Work will also spell out the exact PPE for a task
- For hazardous substances specifically, a COSHH assessment will need to be referred to.
- Always follow site rules and signage

Reenforce the REMEMBER

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Toolbox Talk - Attendance Sheet

Site/Department Name:

Trainer Name:

Signature:

Toolbox Talk Topic:

Date:

Name	Signature

Any further feedback or questions from attendees regarding this toolbox talk topic?