



Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be considered when risks to health and safety cannot be controlled by other means. Considered as the last resort, it may also be used as a short term contingency during maintenance/repair work or as an additional protective measure.

PPE is defined as “all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects him/her against one or more risks to his/her health and safety”.

Many liability claims allege that PPE was not provided, inappropriate or its non-use routinely condoned through poor supervision and monitoring. Such claims invariably succeed in the absence of documentary evidence to the contrary and, where used to control disease exposures, records may have to be retained over an employee’s working life.

BEST PRACTICE

Risk assessments relating to the specific job task and the working environment should be conducted regularly to review and eliminate the need for PPE where reasonably practicable.

Where required, PPE is assessed and selected to ensure it is suitable for the user, protecting against hazards presented by the task and the environment. In addition:-

1. PPE should offer the correct level of protection without increasing the overall level of risk.
2. PPE is CE marked and complies with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992.
3. Users are actively consulted in the assessment and selection of PPE, and engaged in any trial assessments, as this will increase the likelihood of it being worn. It should be suitable for the user in terms of fit, comfort and compatibility with other forms of PPE.
4. Where practicable, users should have a choice of the PPE they may select.
5. After risk assessing PPE, the selected items must be made freely available to all users.
6. Information, instruction and training is provided to all users on its correct use together with the procedures for inspection, maintenance, storage and replacement.
7. Users sign for its receipt, that they understand company policy on its need and use, and that they have been trained in the correct use. Records are retained and properly archived.
8. Managers and visitors exposed to hazards requiring PPE, lead by example and wear PPE, regardless of their exposure time to the hazard.
9. Management monitor, supervise and enforce the wearing and correct use of PPE. Inspection, auditing and monitoring of compliance is documented.
10. Counselling and, ultimately, disciplinary procedures are invoked against personnel who fail to comply with site rules relating to PPE.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 should be consulted. Additionally, PPE requirements are stipulated under section 9 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Other regulations also stipulate their own requirements. For example:-

- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
- The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002
- COSHH Regulations 2002
- Control of Lead at Work 2002
- The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999
- The Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989.

FURTHER GUIDANCE & USEFUL INFORMATION

- www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/68-8.pdf>
- For further information contact rm@uk.qbe.com