



Health and Safety law on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is defined in the Regulations 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 against one or more risks to his health or safety', eg safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses'

Cycle helmets or crash helmets worn by employees on the roads are not covered by the Regulations. Motorcycle helmets are legally required for motorcyclists under road traffic legislation.

The main requirement is that personal protective equipment is to be supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways.

The Regulations also require that PPE:

- is properly assessed before use to ensure it is suitable;
- is maintained and stored properly;
- is provided with instructions on how to use it safely; and is used correctly by employees.

An employer cannot ask for money from an employee for PPE, whether it is returnable or not. This includes agency workers if they are legally regarded as your employees. If employment has been terminated and the employee keeps the PPE without the employer's permission, then, as long as it has been made clear in the contract of employment, the employer may be able to deduct the cost of the replacement from any wages owed.

To allow the right type of PPE to be chosen, carefully consider the different hazards in the workplace. This will enable you to assess which types of PPE are suitable to protect against the hazard and for the job to be done. Ask your supplier for advice on the different types of PPE available and how suitable they are for different tasks. It may be necessary in a few particularly difficult cases to obtain advice from specialist sources and from the PPE manufacturer.

Consider the following when assessing whether PPE is suitable:

- Is it appropriate for the risks involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the risk may occur? For example, eye protection designed for providing protection against agricultural pesticides will not offer adequate face protection for someone using an angle grinder to cut steel or stone.
- Does it prevent or adequately control the risks involved without increasing the overall level of risk?
- Can it be adjusted to fit the wearer correctly?
- Has the state of health of those who will be wearing it been taken into account?
- What are the needs of the job and the demands it places on the wearer? For example, the length of time the PPE needs to be worn, the physical effort required to do the job and the requirements for visibility and communication.
- If more than one item of PPE is being worn, are they compatible? For example, does a particular type of respirator make it difficult to get eye protection to fit properly?

Train and instruct people how to use PPE properly and make sure they are doing this.

- Make sure anyone using PPE is aware of why it is needed, when it is to be used, repaired or replaced and its limitations.

- Because PPE 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. Never allow exemptions for those jobs which take 'just a few minutes'.

- Check regularly that PPE is being used and investigate fully any reasons why it is not. Safety signs can be useful reminders to wear PPE.

Make sure equipment is:

- well looked after and properly stored when it is not being used, for example in a dry, clean cupboard, or in the case of smaller items, such as eye protection, in a box or case;
- kept clean and in good repair - follow the manufacturer's maintenance schedule (including recommended replacement periods and shelf lives). Simple maintenance can be carried out by the trained wearer, but more intricate repairs should only be done by specialists. Make sure suitable replacement PPE is always readily available.

Ensure any PPE you buy is 'CE' marked and complies with the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002. The CE marking signifies that the PPE satisfies certain basic safety requirements and in some cases will have been tested and certified by an independent body.

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Fleet Health and Safety

Your First Step to Compliance...

HSE

Proposed changes to First aid at work regulations

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has announced changes to the first aid at work regulations that are likely to become effective from 1 October 2009. The main changes include the four day First Aid at work course becoming a three day course and the creation of a new one day Emergency first aid at work course. It is expected that the requalification course will remain at two days.

Current certification will remain valid up to its existing three year expiry date even if that is after 1st October next year. Employees whose training expires before the implementation date must seek requalification as it becomes due and not wait and allow it to expire.

NEWS

Work experience pupil badly burned

A 15-year old boy received 25% burns to his abdomen and limbs while on a work experience placement last Thursday at Castlefield Works in Radcliffe, Lancs.

One account states he was burning waste at the time of the incident and that a prohibition order was served on the employer after the incident.
28th July 2009.

Manslaughter convictions for London builders

Two builders were convicted of the manslaughter of a 15-year old who died in an accident in April 2007. The deceased was a casual labourer who was crushed under a wall being demolished in Hadley Wood, Enfield, and had been left with a colleague to work unsupervised and untrained at the wall which was known to be dangerous. No risk assessments were prepared and no welfare facilities provided, sentencing takes place next week. 16th July 2009.

Chef slips and suffers severe arm burns from hot oil

A Commis Chef working in a hotel kitchen was walking past a deep fat fryer carrying a box of potato peelings when his foot slipped from under him, as he reached out to steady himself he plunged his arm into hot oil. He sustained full thickness burns to his hand and arm and further burns to his face due to the oil splashing onto him. As a result he underwent surgery and was off work for almost five months

The company were charged with failing to undertake a suitable risk assessment and put in place a safe system of work. The company pleaded guilty, were fined £14,000 and had to pay costs of £2,000.

HSE ASBESTOS CAMPAIGN

Please check this out
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/hiddenkiller/index.htm>