

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the Workplace: Employee Factsheet

What is PPE?

PPE is equipment or clothing worn to protect the user from known hazards in the workplace.

Commonly worn items of PPE are safety helmets and safety footwear.

Other examples are:

- respirators
- safety harnesses
- ear-plugs or muffs
- safety goggles, face shields or eye protectors
- protective gloves
- protective and high visibility clothing.

Limitations

- PPE will only protect the user of the PPE
- it must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions – never misuse PPE
- it must be in good condition to be fully effective - your health or life might depend on it
- it is better for hazards to be controlled at source where possible, rather than reliance being placed on PPE.

Make sure PPE is:

- well looked after and properly stored when it is not being used
- appropriate for the task
- kept clean and in good repair; maintain according to the manufacturer's schedule.

Your responsibilities:

- only use PPE in accordance with instructions and training given
- return PPE to its safe storage, where provided, after use
- take reasonable care of your PPE and report loss or defects to your employer
- never work without PPE when it is known to be necessary.

Did you know?

Fact 1

Around 9,000 accidents, which could have been prevented with correctly used and maintained Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are reported each year.

Fact 2

In many cases, it is not possible to completely eliminate hazards by other means.

Fact 3

The dangers arising from many hazardous activities can only be controlled by wearing PPE.

Do you know?

- Why PPE is necessary, when it is to be used, repaired or replaced and its limitations?
- the dangers of working without PPE?
- the procedure for replacing PPE and reporting defects?
- where to obtain information and guidance?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, you must seek further advice and information from your health and safety representative or manager.

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