

Personal protective equipment

Reason	Some dangers arising from hazardous activities can only be controlled by the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
Outline	This talk covers the measures necessary to ensure that the use of PPE is effective.



PPE should be appropriate to the job



Simple PPE can help to prevent long-term ill health



PPE can be a life-saver: use it properly and look after it, and it should look after you.

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What is PPE?

1. PPE is equipment or clothing worn to protect the user from known hazards in the workplace.
2. In construction, the most commonly worn items of PPE are safety helmets, eye protection, high-visibility clothing and safety footwear.
3. Other examples of PPE include respiratory protective equipment (RPE), safety harnesses, earplugs, protective gloves and specialist clothing.

Limitations

1. PPE will only protect the user.
2. It must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and any training provided.
3. The actual level of effectiveness is difficult to assess as it depends on how well the PPE fits the individual wearing it.
4. PPE must be in good condition to be fully effective. Do not mistreat it; your health, safety or life might depend upon it.

What your employer must do

1. Assess the risks to your health and safety arising from your work activities.
2. Try to organise work activities so that PPE is not necessary, as it should only be considered as a last resort.
3. Where PPE is necessary, select appropriate items that suit the wearer.
4. Supply you with the necessary PPE free of charge.
5. Train you to use your PPE, explain its limitations and explain the implications of not using it.
6. Ensure compatibility if more than one item of PPE is worn.
7. Ensure that PPE is maintained and replace defective or lost PPE, at no cost to you.

What you must do

1. Use PPE in accordance with instructions and training given.
2. Return PPE to its storage, where provided, after use.
3. Take reasonable care of your PPE and report its loss or any damage to it to your employer.
4. Never work without PPE when it is known to be necessary.



How much can your employer charge you for PPE?

What factors will determine the life of a safety helmet?

How do you think wearing PPE could increase the dangers to you?

What should you do if you find an item of your PPE is damaged?

Where should you store your PPE?