

The Guide to

Safety Workwear



There are regulations covering the safety workwear and PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), and employers must provide the adequate PPE at work to meet the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. The employer is obliged to provide safe working conditions including instructions, procedures, training and supervision.

Safety workwear will help to avoid or minimise the risk of injuries to:

- the lungs, e.g. from breathing in contaminated air- dust, vapour, gas, oxygen-deficient atmospheres
- the head and feet, e.g. from falling materials, falling or flying objects, the risk of head bumping, hair entanglement.
- the eyes, e.g. from flying particles or splashes of corrosive liquids, chemical or metal splash, dust, projectiles, gas and vapour, radiation
- the skin, e.g. from contact with corrosive materials
- the body, e.g. from extremes of heat or cold, adverse weather, chemical or metal splash, spray from pressure leaks or spray guns, impact or penetration, contaminated dust, excessive wear or entanglement of own clothing

PPE is the personal protective equipment that will protect the user against health or safety risks at work. Safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses are considered as a PPE. It also includes respiratory protective equipment.

When choosing PPE use products that are:

- CE marked in accordance with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations
- Consider appropriate size, fit, weight of the PPE
- Ensure all PPE can be used at the same

time, e.g. wearing safety glasses may disturb the seal of a respirator, causing air leaks

- Provide instruction how to use it, e.g. how to remove gloves without contaminating their skin

Apart from PPE provision, the Regulations also require that PPE is:

- adequately assessed before use to make sure it is fit for purpose;
- maintained and stored properly;
- provided with instructions on how to use it safely;
- used correctly by employees

When it comes to the protective clothing and PPE employer never should charge for its provision or allow exemptions from using it. Moreover, the employer should ensure the appropriate storage, and keep the replacement PPE and regularly check the condition of the used one.

Types of the PPE

To protect eyes - safety spectacles, goggles, face screens, face shields, visors

To protect head & neck - Industrial safety helmets, bump caps, hairnets and firefighters' helmets

To protect ears - Earplugs, earmuffs, semi-insert/canal caps

To protect hands & arms - Gloves, gloves with a cuff, gauntlets and sleeving that covers part or all of the arm

To protect feet and legs - Safety boots and shoes with protective toecaps and penetration-resistant, mid-sole wellington boots and specific footwear, e.g. foundry boots and chainsaw boots.

To protect lungs - half and full masks, filtering facepieces and respirators and power-assisted respirators, fresh-air hose, compressed airline and self-contained breathing apparatus

To protect the whole body - Conventional or disposable overalls, boiler suits, aprons, chemical suits, safety harnesses or life jackets, high-visibility clothing

High-Vis - All high-vis clothing must be BS EN 471 standard and CE marked- different levels of retroreflection performance. Both factors run from Class 1 to Class 3.

Footwear - Slip resistant and with steel front, however it is recommended to resist using the same footwear for various tasks and in different working conditions.

Helmets - In most cases, the law requires head protection on construction sites due to the risk of injuries. The Employment Act 1989 gives an exemption for turban-wearing Sikhs working on construction sites from the need to wear head protection. Important fact about PPE like for instance helmets is that they have an expiry date, so use them wisely. We can distinguish between different helmet colours.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recently informed about the case where a roofing firm from Malton has been found guilty of safety breaches and fined £10,000 with £1,355 costs after a worker suffered severe skull injury following a fall from height during work on a construction company's office. HSE investigation proved there was no risk assessment carried before work commencement and no precautions have been taken to avoid falls from the roof. To reduce the risk of such accidents an appropriate type of safety helmets should be used. The helmet should meet the required parameters like shock absorption, resistance to penetration, adjustable fit, etc.

First of all the risk of any injury on the site should be assessed, controlled and reduced before works commencement. The safety helmets do not prevent head injury accidents but only reduce the severity. Other preventive methods include installation of toeboards, erection of nets and fans or securing the risky elements on site, etc.

The contractor has the legal obligation under Regulation 48 of the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations (Subsidiary legislation of Chapter 59) to provide each worker employed on the site with a suitable safety helmet and to ensure that no one remains on the site without the head protection.

A safety helmet protects against impact with the force of the impact spread over the surface of the head lessening the chance of injury. To achieve the purpose, stringent performance/test requirements apply to safety helmets.

The shell and harness are two primary components of the safety helmet. They have to fulfil certain mandatory requirements of international/ national



WHITE

- SITE MANAGER
- COMPETENT OPERATIVE
- VEHICLE MARSHAL
(distinguished by the wearing of a different coloured high visibility vest)



BLACK

- SUPERVISOR



BLUE

- ALL THOSE COMING TO SITE WHO DO NOT FALL INTO ANY OF THE ABOVE CATEGORIES



RED

- SLINGER/SIGNALLER

standards on the constructional features like the helmet profile, the clearances between the shell and the harness at various locations or the adjustable increments of headband and nape strap. The materials for safety helmets should be of durable quality.

The helmets colours will have to be implemented on all new construction sites. All helmets must meet British Standard BS EN 397.

The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 and the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended) give the primary requirements. The PPE at Work Regulations does not apply where the following five sets of regulations require the provision and use of PPE against these hazards. For example, gloves used to prevent dangerous chemicals penetrating the skin would be covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended). The Regulations are:

- The Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002.
- The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999.
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended).
- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

Plumber - full overalls, non-conductive clothing, eye protection, leather or latex gloves, enclosed mask with filter, protective earwear will be required when sound levels reach 85 decibels or more

Plasterer - proper face mask with filter, goggles or protective glasses, full-body coverings, gloves

Electrician - rubber insulated gloves or leather protective gloves, additional liner gloves, Arc rated jackets, trousers, and visors plus fire retardant clothing

Bricklayer - face masks and fully-enclosed protective eyewear, sturdy protective gloves, protective footwear, ear protectors, helmet, hardwearing apparel

Carpenter - safety glasses, hearing protector, face mask, full face shield,

General builder - A full complement of safety workwear, including ear protectors, eye protectors, hard hats, face masks, protective clothing, and protective footwear. It depends on task so variety of options should be provided- heavy-duty rubber gloves should be used when working with concrete, while insulated gloves and sleeves should be used when working around electrical systems

Decorator - safety glasses, safety gloves, hard wearing shoes

Welder - full-face shields, respirators, gloves and all clothing should be flame-retardant, and heavy-duty. Welding curtains could also give additional protection for other workers.

Site Manager - high-vis clothing (heavy duty clothing when site condition requires it)

Equipment Operator - clothing adequate for weather conditions, high-vis, Steel-toed boots, padded gloves, ear protectors

Disclaimer: This guidance is the introductory information only, please refer to the adequate regulations on PPE and building site clothing for more detailed advice. For more information visit www.hse.gov.uk

(SOURCE: HSE)

