

To Deans, HoFAs, HOSs, Directors of Research Institutes
From Dr Melanie Taylor, Head of Safety Services
Date 9 December 2014
cc Mr W Spinks, Prof N Thakker, Dr D Barker, School Safety Advisors, Safety Representatives
Reference Safety Circular 5/2014

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – eye protection

Please note that:

- (1) The Safety, Health and Environment Committee, chaired by the Registrar, Secretary & Chief Operating Officer and with the Associate Vice-President for Compliance, Risk & Research Integrity as a member, has expressed concern about the number and nature of reported accident involving splashes to eyes and asked for additional guidance to be brought forward in order to drive improvement in the safety culture and behaviours relating to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and protective eyewear in particular.
- (2) These concerns have subsequently been discussed by the Board of Governors who provided support for the recommended approach.
- (3) All managers are asked to implement the steps outlined below, and report back to their local safety committees (or line manager, if appropriate).

The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992¹ place employers under a set of very specific duties relating to the provision and use of PPE. PPE is the *last* resort in the hierarchy of controls for good reason: if it fails, the potential for serious injury is immediately present.

In several cases where eye splashes have been reported, suitable PPE has not been worn. The reasons include poor selection or description of control measures in risk assessments, lack of supervision, lack of instruction to users about the reasons for wearing it, and poor selection of PPE so it does not fit comfortably.

Managers are asked to:

- **where existing risk assessments list eye protection as a control measure**, check that effective inspection, monitoring and supervision of users takes place, that users understand the need for PPE for the particular activity(ies), and that action is taken when users are found not be wearing eye protection when the risk assessment states that they should be;
- **include in future or amended risk assessments where eye injury is identified as a risk**, a statement confirming that those signing the risk assessments are informed about why they are being asked to wear eye protection, how that protection works and any limits to its effectiveness, and how to proceed if the eye protection issued does not fit or is not comfortable to wear.

Dr Melanie Taylor
Head of Safety Services

¹ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/ppe.htm> contains a lot of useful information about the PPE Regulations duties.