

University Health & Safety Arrangements : Chapter 36



A Framework for the Management of Personal Protective Equipment

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Note.

“Senior Managers” are responsible for health and safety within their organisational unit, specified areas or as a consequence of their activities, and for any additional activities as agreed and delegated to them (e.g. where they accept responsibility for day-to-day safety arrangements for staff who have other line managers, for reasons of geographical or other convenience). They may be Deans, Heads of School, Directors of Institutes, Directors and Heads of Service in non-academic areas, the University Librarian, the Directors of the Manchester Museum and The Whitworth, and their equivalents.

Introduction

1. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is equipment that will protect the user against work-related hazards. PPE includes items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment.
2. The use of PPE should be regarded as a last resort as it is known to be the least effective method of controlling exposure to a hazard. The reasons include:
 - Poor selection of PPE which does not protect against the hazard and therefore is not fit for purpose;
 - Inadequate level of protection;
 - Inadequate maintenance leading to a reduction in the level of protection;
 - PPE not fitting the individual comfortably and individuals not wearing the PPE.
3. Consequently, wherever possible, engineering controls and safe systems of work should always be implemented (so far as is reasonably practicable) before PPE. If PPE is used there is a high level of managerial burden requiring supervisors and line managers to ensure that:
 - The work is fully assessed and the PPE selected is fit for purpose and fits the individual;
 - The PPE is compatible with any other PPE being used;
 - The PPE is maintained, regularly checked for any defects and stored properly away from sources of contamination;
 - Users are provided with instructions on how to use it correctly;
 - The PPE is being worn and used correctly.

Assessment of the use of PPE

4. Assessment involving the use of PPE must cover:
 - Identification of the potential hazard(s) for all aspects of the work activity. The range of hazards can include but is not limited to the following: splashes, falls from height, blows and impacts, crushing, falls of objects from a height, cuts and stabs, slipping, scalds and burns, cold burns, non-ionising radiation, noise and vibration, ionizing radiation, dust and fumes, biological agents, animal bites and scratches.

- Identification of protection from the hazard(s) by methods which do not involve the use of PPE e.g. eliminate the hazard, enclose the hazard (or the person exposed), provide guarding etc.
- Identification of the part(s) of the body affected by the risk
- The characteristics of the PPE required to protect from the hazard(s), and the necessary degree of protection.
- The duration that the PPE can be worn and the limits of its use.
- Whether the PPE might create any additional risk (e.g. making communication more difficult or reducing dexterity) and any compatibility issue with other PPE being used at the same time.

Additional Management Arrangements

5. The assessment must also include the following management arrangements on:

- How information and instructions in the use of PPE will be provided to the user.
- Any regular maintenance including cleaning, disinfection and regular examination for defects.
- How the PPE must be stored (eg in clean facilities away from sources of contamination, or away from sunlight).
- How supervision and training will be undertaken; the latter should include confirmation that the users understand the limits of the PPE within the context of the work being undertaken.
- How the PPE will be disposed of.
- How the user will report any defect of the PPE, and contingency arrangements if defective PPE is identified and replacement arrangements.

Selection of PPE

6. Only safety products which are CE marked in accordance with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 or the UKCA (UK Conformity Assessed) mark, post-Brexit, should be used.



7. The user should be involved in choosing equipment to ensure that it is suitable for the wearer as individuals differ in size, build and shape; these differences can compromise the effectiveness of the PPE if not properly considered. The PPE is more likely to be used if the wearer has been involved in the selection.

Guidance

8. Further guidance on the selection and use of specific PPE can be found in the Safety Services' toolkit at <http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/ppe>

Document control box	
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