

Selection, Issue, Use and Maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment

Introduction

In general, personal protective equipment (PPE) should only be used as a last resort when the risk of a hazard materialising cannot be adequately controlled by any other means (elimination, substitution etc). PPE includes protective clothing (overalls, laboratory coats, gloves, safety footwear etc) as well as equipment such as protective eyewear, safety harnesses etc. The need for PPE for a specific task is determined via a risk assessment of the task, which may include a CoSHH Assessment where hazardous substances are involved. Where PPE is required it should be made readily available and maintained in good condition.

PPE required by legislation, such as laboratory coats, must be worn at all times.

If

The key characteristics necessary to provide an adequate degree of protection have been defined and appraised

Where appropriate, user representatives or Union representatives, participated in the selection process

Issuing appropriate items of PPE, or making them readily available within the local area

Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for cleaning and disinfecting any 'shared' PPE to ensure there is no danger to the next person using it

Ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements for the storage, protection, inspection, maintenance, cleaning and disposal of PPE

Ensuring that records are kept of PPE inspections, maintenance and cleaning

Ensuring that, for each item of PPE selected and issued, users are trained in the correct use and, if appropriate, maintenance of the PPE. This training shall include information on:

- The risks that will and will not be controlled

- The performance limitations of the PPE provided

- The precise circumstances when the PPE must be used

- The consequences to health or risk of injury if not used

- The cleaning, repair, maintenance and replacement requirements and procedures

Ensuring that staff, students, contractors and visitors, when required to do so, wear all provided items of PPE