

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 a need for PPE has been identified for staff, this would be the minimum standard of protection provided for students, contractors and visitors.

LSHTM requires risk assessments to be carried out to determine the necessity for PPE, which shall only be used as a last resort when the risk of a hazard materialising can not be controlled by any other means.

The sharing of certain types of PPE by employees, students and visitors is prohibited, unless it is only required for limited periods of time. When any PPE *is* shared, it must be cleaned and where required decontaminated to ensure that there are no apparent health risks to future users.

There must be appropriate storage for PPE when not in use.

Application

It is the policy of LSHTM to provide staff, students, contractors and visitors with appropriate safe plant and equipment and safe systems of work, as determined by risk assessments. However, if these measures cannot provide adequate levels of protection to employees, students, contractors or visitors then it is the policy of LSHTM to provide the relevant personnel with appropriate PPE and require those people to wear it.

Responsibilities

Deans of Faculty and Directors of Professional Support Services

The Deans of Faculty and Directors of Professional Support Services are responsible for:

- The implementation of this procedure within their area of responsibility
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place to provide appropriate information to members of staff, students, visitors etc.
- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all tasks/processes/pieces of equipment etc within their area(s) of responsibility.
- Ensuring that, where a risk assessment highlights the requirement for PPE, a formal assessment is made of the suitability of each item of PPE to adequately control the level of risk identified by the risk assessment. A record shall be kept of this assessment and shall identify that:
 - Options other than the use of PPE have been considered

- 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
- Monitoring the requirement for PPE and arranging suitable provision of designated PPE to be made available to users, both for planned replacements and in reaction to sudden demands, e.g. for visitors or temporary workers
- Ensuring that users check PPE before each use to ensure that it is in good condition

Note: The Deans of Faculty/Directors of Professional Support Services may delegate the above tasks to specific Managers, within their area of authority, as appropriate.

Responsibility for health and safety forms part of managerial responsibility, through the management chain, even if not formally specified in the job description. The supervision of health and safety can be delegated, but the responsibility cannot.

The Safety Office

The Safety Office is responsible for:

- Providing support to all staff required to manage or use PPE, if requested and appropriate

References

- Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002
- Personal Protective Equipment (EC Directive) (Amendment) Regulations 1996
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/ppe.htm>