

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) POLICY

1. Preamble

The University Health and Safety Policy requires the use of appropriate personal protective equipment to ensure the health and safety of staff and students on campus. The policy also extends to contractors and visitors of the University. PPE is considered as a “last resort” or an interim measure until a more satisfactory method of risk control can be identified. Clearly, whenever possible, elimination of the risk or other methods of protection are preferable.

2. Definition of Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment is any equipment or clothing intended to be worn or held by a person at work, which affords protection against one or more risk to health or safety. Personal protective equipment is therefore an essential safety net in many hazardous situations where it is not reasonably practicable to reduce safety risks to zero. In practical terms, personal protective equipment is any form of protection from your head right down to your feet and just about anywhere in-between.

3. Responsibility for Personal Protective Equipment Programme

3.1 Heads of Departments

It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to:

- (a) ensure that the need of personal protective equipment for their staff, students, and visitors are catered for;
- (b) ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided and used by those affected personnel; and
- (c) ensure that high risk areas are suitably demarcated so that all personnel entering the area use suitable personal protective equipment.

The Head may appoint a designated control officer(s) to assist the DHSO in managing the departmental PPE arrangement, if necessary.

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3.2 Departmental Health & Safety Officer and the Designated PPE Control Officer(s)

They are to:

- (a) advise Head and staff members of the Department on operation of the PPE arrangements;
- (b) co-ordinate with supervisors on needs assessment of PPE and their issuance;
- (c) identify and demarcate high risk areas and activities that require the use of personal protective equipment;
- (d) liaise with their department on central ordering and replacement of PPE; and
- (e) seek advice from HSEO on PPE related issues.

3.3 Supervisors¹

The supervisors should satisfy themselves that the risk of the activities and the workplace has been evaluated and appropriate action has been taken to control the risk. Where PPE is identified as one of the control measures, the supervisor is responsible to:

- (a) identify users of PPE and areas in which PPE must be worn;
- (b) select and provide appropriate PPE when such hazard(s) is in place;
- (c) inform, instruct and train PPE users on the hazard(s) concerned, the proper use, storage and maintenance of the equipment;
- (d) check that the PPE is properly maintained and damaged items replaced; and
- (e) co-operate with the designated PPE control officer and DHSO in the operation of the departmental PPE arrangements.

1. *Supervisor here means the in-charge of a workshop/laboratory, teaching staff and those supervising an experiment/a research project/a task.*

3.4 Personnel in Designated Personal Protective Equipment Area

All personnel in the designated personal protective equipment area must use suitable protective equipment provided.

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3.5 PPE User

PPE User is to:

- (a) make full and proper use of the PPE provided, in accordance with instructions and training received;
- (b) take reasonable care of the PPE by cleaning and examining it as appropriate;
- (c) report to the supervisor if the equipment is defective or is lost; and
- (d) store it safely after use.

3.6 Health, Safety and Environment Office

Health, Safety and Environment Office is to:

- (a) arrange tender for direct purchase of prescribed personal protective equipment;
- (b) advise on personal protective equipment related issues;
- (c) arrange training periodically on the proper use of personal protective equipment, esp. respirator and safety harness; and
- (d) monitor the implementation of PPE policy.

3.7 Contractors

Contractors' PPE policy should be in line with the University PPE policy.

3.8 Suppliers

All PPE suppliers must be verified by the HSEO. This is to ensure that the supplied PPE complies with relevant standards.

4. Assessment of Risk

Each activity of the department including those of contractors needs to be assessed. Based on the assessed level of risk, appropriate control measures should be taken.

To assist in identifying which part of the body needs protection and the related hazards, a simple risk survey form (HSE Form 18) could be used.

Once potential hazards are known, the supervisor may select the types of PPE that would be suitable. Remember! The risks and the parts of the body endangered are the two key elements to be considered.

Consideration must be given not only to the person engaged in the process or activity but also to those who may come into contact with and be at risk from the hazards.

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Such information should be made known to the potentially affected personnel or visitors.

5. Issuance and Maintenance of PPE

PPE should be issued on a personal basis and then used only by that person. If a protector is re-issued to another person it should first be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. A suitable record of issue should be kept.

For employees with eye sight deficiency who have to work long hours in workplaces requiring eye protection, prescription lenses need to be incorporated into their safety spectacles and the cost falls on to the department which is responsible for providing suitable eye protective equipment.

PPE should be protected by being kept in suitable cases when not in use. Larger items such as visors may need to be kept in lockers. Proper storage should be seen as an investment as every piece of protection will last longer if handled and stored with care.

All users should be shown the correct method of cleaning their own protectors and replacing minor components.

6. Process Specific Consideration

The Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Protection of Eyes) Regulations stated specific requirements on the provisions of approved eye protectors, approved shield and approved fixed shields for the 14 specified processes (refer to Appendix A). The law also requires designation of eye protection areas and issuance of eye safety precautions. The following are examples of the types of processes or activities found in the University that could present risks to the face or eyes and where appropriate protection would be required:

- (a) work with power driven tools where chippings, particles or abrasive materials are likely to fly;
- (b) work with hand tools where chippings or particles are likely to fly;
- (c) work with chemical substances of any form which are likely to cause injury or irritation;
- (d) work with molten metal or other molten materials or substances;
- (e) work with cryogenic materials;
- (f) welding operations where intense light or other optical radiation is emitted at levels likely to cause injury, or other activities with similar risks;
- (g) work with any risk of exposure to light radiation from instruments that produce light amplification or radiation; and

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(h) use of any gas or vapour under pressure.

There are other legislative requirements on processes, material or activities requiring a certain type of PPE. See Appendix B for reference.

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Appendix A

Specified Processes listed in the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Protection of Eyes) Regulations:

- (a) Dry grinding of metals or articles of metal applied by hand to a revolving wheel, band or disc driven by mechanical power.
- (b) Turning (external or internal) of non-ferrous metals, or of cast iron, or of articles of such metals or such iron, where the work is done dry, other than precision turning where the use of eye protectors or a screen would seriously interfere with the work, or turning by means of hand tools.
- (c) Welding or cutting of metals by means of an electrical, oxy-acetylene or similar process.
- (d) Truing or dressing of an abrasive wheel.
- (e) Any work carried out with a hand-held cartridge-operated tool, including the operation of loading and unloading live cartridges into such a tool, and the handling of such a tool for the purpose of maintenance, repair or examination when the tool is loaded with a live cartridge.
- (f) The handling in open vessels or manipulation of acids, alkalis, dangerous corrosive materials, whether liquid or solid, and other substances which are similarly injurious to the eyes.
- (g) The use of compressed air for removing swarf, dust, dirt or other particles.
- (h) Any process involving the use of an instrument which produces light amplification by the stimulated emission of radiation.
- (i) The production of metal castings at pressure die casting machines.
- (j) Working at a spout of, or attending to, a cupola or furnace where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to the eyes from molten metal.
- (k) Pouring or skimming molten metal.
- (l) Work in the manufacture of glass and in the processing of glass and the handling of cullet where in any of the foregoing cases there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to the eyes of any person engaged in the work from particles or fragments thrown off.
- (m) Inspection of glass bottles which contain aerated liquids.

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- (n) The following processes when carried on by means of hand tools or other portable tools-
 - (i) Fettling of metal castings involving the removal of metal.
 - (ii) Cutting out or cutting off (not including drilling or punching back) of cold rivets or bolts from boilers or other plant or from ships.
 - (iii) Chipping or scaling or scurfing of boilers or ships' plates.
 - (iv) Breaking, cutting, dressing, carving or drilling of concrete, plaster, slag or stone (whether natural or artificial).

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Appendix B

Other PPE Related Regulations

Protective Clothing and Equipment have been mentioned in the following regulations:

- (a) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Asbestos) Regulation.
- (b) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Blasting by Abrasives) Special Regulations.
- (c) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Cartridge-Operated Fixing Tools) Regulations.
- (d) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Dry Batteries) Regulations.
- (e) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Dangerous Substances) Regulations.
- (f) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Gas Welding and Flame Cutting) Regulation.
- (g) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Noise at Work) Regulation.
- (h) Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Protection of Eyes) Regulations.