

# Role of Managers, Supervisors and PPE

## Level 3 Health and Safety in the Workplace

### Introduction

Managers and supervisors have big roles to play in ensuring that health and safety policies are followed: they must lead by example and encourage all employees to adopt a positive attitude towards health and safety.

On an individual level, each employee also has a personal role to play. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is a large part of this responsibility as, without it, accidents are more likely to happen.

This section of the course covers the roles of managers, supervisors and PPE in ensuring that your health and safety procedures are effective.

### Topics to be Covered

The topics covered in this section are:

- Managers
- Supervisors
- Personal protective equipment
- Types of personal protective equipment
- PPE training and maintenance
- CE marking

### Managers

Managers have a responsibility to provide leadership and to promote responsible attitudes towards health and safety. Expectations vary by organisation, but generally each manager should:

- Ensure that each new employee is given induction training, including the precautions and procedures appropriate to their specific job roles and the location of first aid boxes, fire exits and fire-fighting equipment.
- Ensure that all staff are made aware of the procedures in place if they face any serious or imminent dangers and the name of the competent person designated to implement those procedures.
- Ensure that all staff members for whom they are responsible understand the health and safety policy, risk assessments and their personal responsibility for health and safety.

**Managers should also:**

- Ensure that temporary employees are supplied with information about any special occupational qualifications or skills required to carry out the work safely.
- Keep up to date with health and safety matters within the organisation.
- Investigate all accidents with the assistance of the competent person and with a view to prevention in the future.
- Ensure good housekeeping standards are applied.
- Where appropriate, periodically review all new and existing equipment to ensure safety, including inspection, maintenance and training.
- Carry out regular safety checks and audits.
- Continuously strive to improve health and safety performance within their area of responsibility.

## Supervisors

Supervisors have responsibility for providing leadership and to specifically apply the safety management system in their sections.

Again, expectations can vary by organisation, but generally each supervisor should ensure that:

- All tasks carried out in their sections are performed with the utmost regard for the health and safety of all those involved.
- All accidents and near misses are reported immediately to the responsible person.
- They supply sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work, through an understanding of their personal responsibilities.

Supervisors should also:

- Arrange inspections of equipment, such as lighting, fire alarms, fire escapes, fire extinguishers and first aid facilities, on a regular basis to ensure their efficiency and maintenance.
- Ensure staff for whom they are responsible are aware of any procedures in place to deal with serious or imminent danger.
- Contribute to and support continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

Where appropriate, particular regard should be paid to plant machinery, equipment and methods of working to ensure they are safe and do not endanger health.

Supervisors are also in charge of providing safe arrangements for the handling, storage and movement of materials, equipment and substances hazardous to health.

# Personal Protective Equipment

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 define personal protective equipment (PPE) as 'all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects the wearer against one or more risks to their health or safety'.

Hearing protection and respiratory protective equipment (RPE) provided for work situations are not covered by these regulations because other regulations apply to them. However, these items need to be compatible with any other PPE provided.

Cycle helmets or crash helmets worn by employees on the roads are also not covered by the regulations. Motorcycle helmets, however, are legally required for motorcyclists under road traffic legislation.

The main requirement of the PPE regulations is that personal protective equipment is to be supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways. The regulations also require that PPE:

- Is properly assessed before use to ensure it is suitable.
- Is maintained and stored properly.
- Is provided with instructions on how to use it safely.
- Is used correctly by employees.

An employer cannot ask for money from an employee for PPE, whether it is returnable or not. This includes agency workers if they are legally regarded as your employees.

If employment has been terminated and the employee keeps the PPE without the employer's permission then, as long as it has been made clear in the contract of employment, the employer may be able to deduct the cost of the replacement from any wages owed.

To allow the right type of PPE to be chosen, carefully consider the different hazards in the workplace. This will enable you to assess which types of PPE are suitable to protect against the hazard and for the job to be done. Remember that PPE should always be the final control measure you implement.

Ask your supplier for advice on the different types of PPE available and how suitable they are for different tasks. In a few particularly difficult cases, it may be necessary to obtain advice from specialist sources and from the PPE manufacturer.

When assessing whether PPE is suitable, consider whether it's appropriate for the risks involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the risk may occur. For example, eye protection designed for providing protection against agricultural pesticides will not offer adequate face protection for someone using an angle grinder to cut steel or stone.

When selecting PPE, consider:

- Does it prevent or adequately control the risks involved without increasing the overall level of risk?
- Can it be adjusted to fit the wearer correctly?
- Has the state of health of those who will be wearing it been taken into account?
- What are the needs of the job and the demands it places on the wearer? For example, the length of time the PPE needs to be worn, the physical effort required to do the job and the requirements for visibility and communication.
- If more than one item of PPE is being worn, are they compatible? For example, does a particular type of respirator make it difficult to get eye protection to fit properly?

## Types of Personal Protective Equipment

Examples of PPE that may be used include:

**Eye protection**, such as safety spectacles, goggles, face-shields and visors. These can protect the wearer against hazards such as chemical or metal splashes, dust, projectiles, gas, vapour and radiation.

**Head protection**, including a range of helmets and bump caps, will protect the wearer against hazards such as the impact from falling or flying objects, the risk of head bumping and hair entanglement.

**Breathing apparatus (BA)**, such as disposable, filtering face-pieces or respirators, half or full-face respirators, air-fed helmets and breathing apparatus. BA protects the wearer against hazards such as dust, vapour, gas and oxygen-deficient atmospheres.

Body protection, such as conventional or disposable overalls, boiler suits and specialist protective clothing such as chain-mail aprons. These will protect the wearer against temperature extremes, adverse weather, chemical or metal splashes, spray from pressure leaks or spray guns, impact or penetration, contaminated dust, excessive wear and entanglement of own clothing.

**Hand and arm protection**, including gloves, gauntlets, mitts, wrist-cuffs and armlets, helps to protect the wearer against hazards such as abrasion, temperature extremes, cuts and punctures, impact, chemicals, electric shock, skin infection, disease and contamination.

**Feet and leg protection**, such as safety boots and shoes with protective toe caps and penetration-resistant mid-soles, gaiters, leggings or spats. These can protect against electrostatic build-up, slipping, cuts and punctures, falling objects, metal or chemical splashes and abrasion.

## PPE Training

Anyone who uses PPE at work must be aware of why it is needed, when it is to be used, repaired or replaced, and its limitations.

This means that you must train and instruct people in how to use PPE properly, and then regularly check that they are following the instructions given.

Because PPE should be used as a last resort after other control measures have been considered, it is important that users wear it at all times when they are exposed to risk. Never allow exemptions for those jobs which take 'just a few minutes'.

Check regularly that PPE is being used correctly and be sure to fully investigate any reasons why it is not.

Safety signs can be useful reminders to wear PPE.

## PPE Maintenance

To ensure PPE stays in good condition and continues to protect the wearer, make sure that it is:

- Well looked after and properly stored when it is not being used. For example, in a dry, clean cupboard, or in a box or case.
- Kept clean and in good repair. Follow the manufacturer's maintenance schedule, including recommended replacement periods and shelf lives.

Simple maintenance can be carried out by the trained wearer, but more intricate repairs should only be done by specialists.

Make sure suitable replacement PPE is always readily available when other PPE is being washed or repaired.

## CE Marking

Any PPE that you buy for use at work must be 'CE' marked and comply with the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002.

The CE marking signifies that the PPE satisfies certain basic safety requirements and, in some cases, will have been tested and certified by an independent body.

## Other Regulations

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations apply in most work situations. However, certain hazards have their own legislation and therefore their own PPE requirements that must be complied with. For example, the COSHH regulations specify gloves that prevent dangerous chemicals from penetrating the skin. These regulations are:

- The Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002.
- The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999.
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.
- The Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989.

## Exercise

PPE must be: (select four answers)

- Paid for by the employee
- Maintained and stored properly
- Suitable for the level and type of risk
- One-size-fits-all
- Used correctly by employees
- Accompanied by instructions on how to use it correctly

## Summary

In this part of the course, you've learnt about the responsibilities that managers, supervisors and employees have in order to promote responsible attitudes towards health and safety.

Managers and supervisors must provide leadership and apply safety management systems in the workplace, ensuring that employees follow the procedures laid down.

Employees have responsibilities to protect their own health and safety by adhering to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations where appropriate. If PPE is provided for work, then it must be worn correctly and at all times around the risk, it must be maintained in good condition, and employees must understand when and why it is needed.