



3.25 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Protective Clothing & Footwear Information Sheet

Purpose

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide information on personal protective equipment (PPE) which may be required to minimise a risk at work.

Specific requirements may be outlined in the [Work Health and Safety \(WHS\) Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) and [Approved Codes of Practice](#). The references to the standards and resources have been included in this information sheet.

This Information Sheet should be read in conjunction with the HSW Handbook Chapter [Hazard Management](#).

Personal Protective Equipment is the **least effective** control measure. This is because users have to remember to wear it, and it does nothing to minimise the underlying hazard. For these reasons, higher level controls must first be considered.

Q1 When should protective clothing and footwear be considered as a control measure?

Where a risk of injury or illness still remains after all other control measures have been applied, a School/Branch may be able to further minimise the remaining risk, by the provision and use of suitable PPE to prevent damage to the body. Refer [WHS Regulations 2012 \(SA\) \[36\]](#).

Generally this would be applied as a result of:

- the School/Branch mandating the use of specific clothing and footwear upon entry to the area as a general precaution such as in a workshop or laboratory, based on a reasonable assessment of the hazards in the area.
- a risk assessment for a task or process, e.g. the use of hazardous chemicals where specific PPE would be prescribed to manage the hazard e.g. type of goggles, gloves, face shield, hood or helmet, screens or exhaust systems. This risk assessment should take into account the environment that the worker is in e.g. communicating with others in the area who may also need to wear PPE.

Where protective clothing and/or footwear is mandatory in an area, appropriate signage complying with [AS 1319 \(1994\) "Safety signs for the occupational environment"](#) must be displayed. Examples of approved signage appear in [Appendix A](#).

Q2 What types of protective clothing are available?

The choice of protective clothing will depend on several factors, including the substances being worked with and the task performed. Protective clothing can be loosely categorised as providing protection from:

- hazardous chemicals;
- heat and cold;
- harmful radiation (excluding ionising radiation);
- mechanical hazards, and
- biological hazards (e.g. blood).

The protective clothing must not create an additional hazard (e.g. dust coats worn near rotating machinery).

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| HSW Handbook | 3.25 Personal Protective Equipment Information Sheet | Effective Date: | 1 March 2016 | V1.0 |
| Authorised by | Associate Director, HR Compliance and Improvement Services | Review Date: | 1 March 2019 | Page 1 of 3 |
| Warning | This process is uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is available on the HSW Website | | | |

Q3 What instruction may be needed for protective clothing?

Where a risk assessment control measure includes the requirement to wear or use protective clothing, it is important that workers are instructed by their Manager/Supervisor or the person who is directing the work, on the nature of the work and how to implement the control measures. This will also include the selection of a suitable size, fit and comfort for the individual, prior to commencing the activity. This instruction could be provided during the local induction if the task/activity is conducted on a regular basis or prior to conducting the activity if it is a new task/activity.

Q4 What are the maintenance requirements for protective clothing?

Where workers are required to wear protective clothing, the School/Branch is required under WHS Regulation 44 to ensure that the equipment is maintained, repaired and/or replaced so that it continues to minimise the risk to the worker who uses it. This includes ensuring that the protective clothing is clean and hygienic.

Where a maintenance regime for any PPE exists, refer to [HSW Chapter Schedule of Programmable Events](#). A pre-use inspection should always be conducted to ensure that the protective clothing and footwear is in good working order.

Q5 What are the storage requirements of protective clothing?

Protective clothing and footwear should be stored to ensure it remains effective and in good order. It should be stored separately from other items, e.g. in a plastic bag.

Q6 What should I do if I contaminate my protective clothing/lab coat?

Any contaminated protective clothing and/or foot wear should be immediately sealed in a plastic bag e.g. autoclave bag, to isolate the contamination. Contact your supervisor to discuss the possibility of decontamination. If decontamination cannot be conducted, please dispose of the clothing as waste (of the type of substance it has been contaminated by).

Q7 When should protective footwear be worn?

In general, protective footwear should be worn to reduce injuries to feet resulting from:

- contact with falling, rolling or cutting objects;
- penetration through the sole or uppers;
- degloving (epidermis pulled away from the feet);
- explosions and electrical hazards;
- contact with hazardous chemicals, heat and molten metals; and
- slipping.

Refer to [AS/NZS 2210.1 “Occupational protective footwear – Guide to selection, care and use”](#)

Q8 Where can I obtain further information about protective clothing and footwear?

- The University’s HSW Handbook Chapter [Hazard Management](#) which outlines the application of the hierarchy of control measures (i.e. Elimination, Substitution, Engineering/Isolation, Administration and PPE);
- [WHS Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#)
- [AS/NZS 2161 “Occupational protective gloves”](#)
- [AS/NZS 2210.1 “Occupational protective footwear – Guide to selection, care and use”](#)

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| HSW Handbook | 3.25 Personal Protective Equipment Information Sheet | Effective Date: | 1 March 2016 | V1.0 |
| Authorised by | Associate Director HR Compliance and Improvement Services | Review Date: | 1 March 2019 | Page 2 of 3 |
| Warning | This process is uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is available on the HSW Website | | | |

Appendix A – Examples of approved safety signs

This is a sample of some approved safety signs under [AS 1319 \(1994\) "Safety signs for the occupational environment"](#).

You must ensure any signage you purchase or install meet this standard.

Please consult AS1319 or the [Human Resources](#) if you require any advice on selecting approved signage.



Gloves Required



Safety Goggles Required



Half-face Respirator Required

