



3.25 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Head & Face Protection 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 head or face 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 head and/or face protection 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 head and/or face. Refer [WHS Regulations 2012 \(SA\) \[36\]](#).

Generally this would be applied as a result of:

- the School/Branch mandating the use of head and/or face protection 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, 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.

Typically head protection would be considered as a control measure where there is a risk of a person:

- being struck on the head by a falling object;
- striking his/her head against a fixed object; or
- making head contact with electrical hazards.

Typically face protection would be considered as a control measure where a person may be at risk of coming into contact with:

- hazardous chemicals, infectious substances, gasses or vapours (e.g. being splashed);
- flying objects (e.g. where tools or machines may cause particles or debris to fly);
- UV radiation (e.g. from welding or excessive exposure to direct sunlight);
- excessive heat.

Where head and/or face protection 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](#).

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 4
Warning	This process is uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is available on the HSW Website			

Q2 What types of head and/or face protection are available?

From [AS/NZS 1800:1998 “Occupational protective helmets – Selection, care and use”](#)

- Type 1—Industrial: This type of helmet was formerly known as the industrial safety helmet. It is suitable for work in the construction industry and engineering.
- Type 2 — High temperature workplaces.
- Type 3 — Bushfire fighting.

NOTE: Different optional or additional design and performance requirements are specified in [AS/NZS 1801 \(1997\) “Occupational protective helmets”](#). They may be specifically requested by a user, e.g. a Type 1 helmet intended to be worn by people engaged in underground mining may have retro-reflective marking and use specific accessories (see [Appendix A of AS/NZS 1800:1998](#)).

In some cases, the helmet is not intended to be used by itself but only together with other personal protective equipment, such as with a face shield and a powered air purifying respirator. In order for the respirator to comply with [AS/NZS 1716 “Respiratory protective devices”](#) and the face shields to comply with [AS/NZS 1337 “Personal eye protection”](#), all components of the system should be used together. The manufacturer’s instructions should be followed, especially as to the compatibility of spare parts.

Q3 What are the best techniques for care of safety helmets?

From [AS/NZS 1800:1998 “Occupational protective helmets – Selection, care and use”](#)

- Follow the manufacturer’s cleaning and maintenance instructions.
- Destroy any helmets that receive any significant impact, damage or deterioration to the shell. (Attention is drawn to the fact that helmets complying with [AS/NZS 1801 \(1997\) “Occupational protective helmets”](#) are required to contain a safety warning regarding damage due to impact and deterioration.)
- Discard any helmets with excessive discolouration of the shell colour, weathering of the surface which may indicate a loss of strength, with splitting or cracking of the material.
- Mark the helmet with the date of issue to the wearer.
- Note: field tests have shown helmet shells generally have a life of at least three years from the time of issue. Components of harnesses (webbing support inside the helmet) may deteriorate more rapidly in service and harnesses should, therefore, be replaced at intervals not longer than two years. For helmets that are used infrequently and stored away from sunlight, dirt and temperature extremes, this guideline/recommendation may not be applicable.

Q4 What should I avoid doing to safety helmets to improve their longevity?

The following practices are considered detrimental to the safe working life and performance of the helmet and should be avoided:

- Storage or placement of helmets near any window, particularly the rear window of motor vehicles through which excessive heat can be generated. NOTE: Helmets placed on the rear window ledge of motor vehicles may also become dangerous missiles in the event of an accident or when sudden braking occurs.
- The helmet may be damaged and rendered ineffective by petroleum and petroleum products, cleaning agents, paints or adhesives and similar products, without the damage being visible to the user. Before any application of adhesive tape, advice should be sought to ensure that the tape adhesive will not degrade the shell material. Generally, self-adhesive pads or stickers have been found not to affect the shell material adversely.
- Aerosol sprays, such as insect repellents, may also damage and render the helmet ineffective without the damage being visible to the user.
- Alteration, distortion or damage to the shell, e.g. splits and cracks, or to the harness, especially if such alteration reduces the clearance between the shell and the wearer’s head (Note – harness refers to the complete assembly by which the helmet is maintained in position on the head).
- The use of safety helmets for any other purpose than that for which they are designed, e.g. as seats, liquid receptacles or wheel chocks.
- The practice of carrying any object inside the helmet when it is being worn, e.g. cigarette lighters, matches, pens or disposable respirators.
- The use of a harness (webbing support inside the helmet) other than that specified by the manufacturer, i.e. another make or model.

Q5 Can I alter a safety helmet?

Any unauthorised alterations to helmets, e.g. drilling of holes in helmets, should not be made, as such alterations:

- may take the helmet out of compliance with [AS/NZS 1801 \(1997\) “Occupational protective helmets”](#), or its accessories out of compliance with their relevant standard;
- may reduce the effectiveness of the helmet; and
- could void any approval or certification of the helmet.

Accordingly, where alterations to a helmet are contemplated, advice should be sought from the manufacturer.

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 4
Warning	This process is uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is available on the HSW Website			

Q6 What instruction maybe needed for head and face protection?

Where a risk assessment control measure includes the requirement to wear or use head and/or face protection, 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. Instructions should also include the selection of a suitable size, fit and comfort for the individual, prior to commencing the activity.

Instruction could be provided either:

- 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.

Q7 Who is responsible for the maintenance requirements for head and face protection?

Where workers are required to wear head and/or face protection, 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 PPE 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 PPE is in good working order.

Q8 Where can I obtain further information about head and face protection?

- 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 1800:1998 “Occupational protective helmets – Selection, care and use”](#);
- [AS/NZS 1801 \(1997\) “Occupational protective helmets”](#).

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 3 of 4
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 [Human Resources](#) if you require any advice on selecting approved signage.



Gloves Required



Safety Goggles Required



Half-face Respirator Required



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 4 of 4
Warning	This process is uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is available on the HSW Website			