

The Educational Institute of Scotland

Personal Protective Equipment

Background

1.1 The AGM in June 2010 approved the following resolution:

“This AGM instructs Council to investigate and report on what obligatory Personal Protective Equipment should be provided and maintained to protect teachers from injury and risk of entrapment while using equipment in Technical Departments.”

Summary of the requirements of The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992

- 2.1 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is all equipment intended to be worn or held by a person at work which protects him/her against one or more risks to his/her health and safety.
- 2.2 Where the risk of injury cannot be adequately controlled by other means, for example machinery guarding, an employer must provide employees with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable.
- 2.3 An assessment of the suitability of PPE must be carried out. Such an assessment will need to be reviewed if there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid or there have been significant changes for example, of users, of risks or in working conditions.
- 2.4 All PPE provided must be suitable and the factors that must be considered in assessing suitability are:
 - (a) appropriateness for the risks involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the risk may occur;
 - (b) the ergonomic requirements and the state of health of the persons who use the PPE, for example if the employee wears glasses prescription eye protection should be provided;
 - (c) correct fit - to ensure this, employers may have to offer a range of types and sizes of PPE. Wearers should be involved in selection and fitting of PPE;
 - (d) effectiveness to prevent or adequately control risks without adding new ones; and
 - (e) compliance with relevant European standards. Under the PPE (Safety) Regulations 1992, personal protective equipment for work which passes specified tests will carry a “CE” mark. This shows that the PPE complies with required standards.

- 2.5 Employers must ensure that different types of PPE worn together are compatible. Assessments must consider the effectiveness and comfort of the combination of PPE that is used, and not just individual items of PPE.
- 2.6 Safety Representatives and PPE users should be involved in the assessment and selection of PPE.
- 2.7 Employers must ensure that all PPE provided is in good working order and is maintained, cleaned or replaced as appropriate.
- 2.8 Appropriate accommodation must be provided for PPE when it is not in use to protect from contamination, dirt, loss or damage.
- 2.2 Employers must provide employees with information, instruction and training that is adequate and appropriate to ensure the correct and effective use of PPE.
- 2.10 Employers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees use properly the equipment provided. It is not enough just to make PPE available to staff.
- 2.11 Employees must use PPE provided in accordance with training and instructions provided.
- 2.12 Employees must report to their employers, any loss of or obvious defect in PPE provided for them. There must be arrangements for reporting loss or defects and employees should be informed about these arrangements.

PPE for use in Technical Departments

- 3.1 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to assess the risks from work activities and to put in place measures to either eliminate the hazards or to control the risk to acceptable levels. A suitable and sufficient risk assessment should be in place for all Technical Departments.
- 3.2 Equipment used in Technical Departments can generate a number of hazards; these include machinery hazards such as entanglement, cutting, stabbing/puncture, shearing, drawing-in (traps) and friction/abrasion.
- 3.3 In controlling machinery hazards the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 requires the risks from dangerous parts of machinery are controlled by provision of machinery guarding/safety devices and, if the risks are still not controlled adequately, by provision of information, training and supervision.
- 3.4 The risk of other specified hazards, eg ejection of article or substance or rupture or disintegration of parts of the work equipment, should be controlled, so far as is reasonably practicable,

by means other than PPE. Suitable eye protection should normally be provided for use at wood or metal working machinery.

- 3.5 If overalls or dustcoats are provided for protection against chemical splashes or contact with hot surfaces or sparks from welding, the sleeves should be tight fitting so as not to increase the risk of entanglement if using machinery with rotating parts.
- 3.6 If overalls or dustcoats are provided as PPE (ie to protect against a hazard) they should be cleaned and maintained by the employer.
- 3.7 Where there is a risk from hazardous substances, for example from wood dust, an assessment should be made under the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH). Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) may be required to be provided, as a last resort, to protect the employee. The suitability and selection of RPE comes under the requirements of COSHH and it must be compatible with other PPE worn or used by the employee.
- 3.8 Gloves may be required for handling of rough material or for when using chemicals (assessed under COSHH) but gloves must not be used whilst operating machinery if this increases the risk of entanglement or drawing-in. The wearing of scarves and loose ties or clothing would also increase the risk of entanglement and must be avoided.
- 3.9 If a teacher is exposed to high noise levels, through class activities, machining materials or proximity to noisy machinery the requirements of the Noise at Work Regulations 2005 will apply and the employer must, among other measures, provide suitable hearing protection.

Conclusions

- 4.1 Since PPE identified through the risk assessment process as necessary and suitable will be specific to an activity or use of equipment, there is not a definitive list of obligatory PPE for work in Technical Departments. It is the duty of each employer to comply with the requirements of health and safety legislation and to consult with employees to ensure that suitable PPE is provided and used correctly.
- 4.2 The range of PPE to be provided to protect teachers/lecturers from the hazards of using equipment in Technical Departments should be identified through the risk assessment process. Following identification of this requirement an assessment of the suitability of the PPE is required by the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992.
- 4.3 Where PPE is provided the full terms of the Regulations must be complied with and the equipment should be properly maintained.

- 4.4 Teachers required to use the PPE should be consulted in the selection process and provided with sufficient information and, where necessary, training to be able to use the PPE effectively.
- 4.5 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Section 9, specifies that employees cannot be charged for anything provided under the requirements of health and safety legislation. PPE must be provided free of charge.
- 4.6 Further information on health and safety legislation, risk assessment, safety inspections, PPE and rights of safety representatives is available in the EIS Health and Safety Handbook.