



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

UOW SAFE@WORK

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

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1 Introduction

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is clothing or equipment designed to protect the wearer (employee, students, contractors or visitors) against workplace hazards.

PPE should only be considered when the hazard cannot be eliminated or where the risk cannot be controlled using other methods from the hierarchy of controls (Substitution, Isolation, Engineering, Administration and PPE).

PPE is the least effective control measure because the hazards and risks are still present. There are also issues of proper fit and design for different individuals. PPE can sometimes be awkward, uncomfortable and limiting, which may make workers less likely to use such equipment.

2 Scope

This guideline outlines the requirements and practices for the management of PPE to assist with the correct selection, supply, use, replacement, maintenance, training, instruction and storage. These guidelines apply to all University employees irrespective of their work location.

3 Definition

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Safety clothing or equipment for specified circumstances or areas, where the nature of the work involved or the conditions under which people are working, requires its wearing or use for their personal protection to minimise risk.
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4 Responsibilities

A detailed list of WHS responsibilities for workers, students and visitors is provided in the [WHS Roles and Responsibilities document](#). Responsibilities for PPE are as follows.

4.1 Faculty and Division Management (including supervisors)

Management and supervisors are to:

- * ensure that risk assessments or safe work procedures are completed that outline the need for PPE and that other risk control measures have been considered
- * provide and make financial allocation for PPE
- * ensure adequate training or instruction and continuing supervision is available at all times to workers, students and visitors using protective equipment
- * ensure procedures are adopted for the selection, inspection, maintenance and cleaning of all PPE and clothing purchased by the area
- * ensure that clear and appropriate signs are positioned in locations where PPE and clothing must be worn
- * ensure teaching employees inform and monitor the use of appropriate clothing and protective equipment by students under their supervision

4.2 WHS Unit

To assist areas in the implementation of these guidelines the WHS Unit will advise on the type of PPE available and in conjunction with the area, provide assistance with the selection, inspection, maintenance or training or instruction required.

4.3 Workers, Visitors and Students

- * Workers, visitors and students are not permitted to enter University buildings or use University facilities or equipment unless they are wearing the appropriate protective clothing and footwear
- * It is an expectation that Workers, visitors and students require suitable footwear appropriate for the activities undertaken in all University buildings
- * Workers, visitors and students will follow any reasonable direction issued by the appropriate persons, with regard to what constitutes, for the purpose of the activity, appropriate clothing and PPE
- * Workers, visitors and students may seek the review of a direction to wear appropriate clothing or PPE. The direction may on request be reviewed by the Faculty of Divisional Head in consultation with the WHS Unit
- * Any noticeable damage, defect or need for cleaning or decontamination is to be reported to the Supervisor.

4.4 Managers and Supervisors of Contractors

Any person managing or supervising contractors are required to ensure the contractors shall provide their employees with PPE that conforms to the relevant Australian Standard. Refer to Appendix 1 for guidance.

5 Legislative Requirements

The *WHS Regulation 2011* outlines the requirement for PPE in the workplace. This includes:

- * the provision of PPE by the University to workers unless the PPE has been provided by another PCBU
- * ensuring PPE is:
 - selected with regards to the nature of the work and any hazard associated with the work
 - suitable with regards to size and fit and reasonably comfortable for the worker associated with the work
 - maintained, repaired or replaced so that it continues to minimise risk to the worker as well as including that it is hygienic, in good working order and used or worn by the worker
- * providing workers with information, training or instruction and instruction in the:
 - proper use and wearing of PPE
 - storage and maintenance of PPE
- * Workers are not to be charged or imposed a levy for the provision of PPE

6 General Requirements

- * The use of PPE is supported by training or instruction, supervision of use, regular maintenance and replacement procedures as outlined through this document.
- * Special protective clothing or equipment shall be free of charge to the employee and available also to the students.
- * Employees and students shall receive appropriate instruction in the use of PPE and clothing.
- * Faculty and Divisional Heads shall provide supervision to ensure, as far as practicable, the appropriate equipment and clothing is being used in the manner required.
- * Employees shall use protective clothing and equipment for the purpose provided and in the manner required by the University, and shall immediately inform management of any defects or deficiencies of which they become aware, in such equipment.
- * All protective equipment and clothing provided by the University shall comply with current legal requirements, and where appropriate, the relevant Australian Standards outlined in Appendix 1.
- * PPE should be replaced when not fit for purpose or as recommended by the manufacturer. Staff and students should refer to their supervisor for replacement of PPE.

6.1 Selection

Selecting the most appropriate PPE for the task is the first step to ensuring the user is protected against the hazard. The decision making process for selecting PPE can be supported by sources of information including:

- * designers, manufacturers or suppliers of PPE can give advice on the specifications and appropriate use of their products.
- * Australian Standards
- * hazardous chemical safety data sheets
- * risk assessments
- * safe work procedures (safe work methods statements/job safety analysis).

It is important to correctly select the required PPE as not all PPE will meet the same performance requirements and provide the same protection. For example, no one type of glove provides adequate protection against all chemicals. A respirator designed to be effective against a certain concentration in air of a contaminant may not be effective for higher concentrations.

When selecting the appropriate PPE consideration should be given to elements such as:

- * durability
- * permeability
- * abrasion resistance
- * burn resistance
- * insulation
- * cut resistance
- * ability to be cleaned
- * size

- * comfort.

Refer to Appendix 1 for guidance on the selection of appropriate PPE.

6.2 Typical PPE and their uses

Circumstances in which PPE may be required to be worn include:

- * **Head protection** (hard hats, helmets, sun hats) shall be provided where there is a risk of injury to the head, such as a person struck on the head by a falling object, a person may strike his/her head against a fixed object, there may be inadvertent head contact with electrical hazards.
- * **Eye protection** (goggles, safety glasses) shall be provided where a risk of eye injury exists. Typical hazards might include flying particles, dust, splashing substances, harmful gases, vapours, aerosols, and high intensity radiation from welding operations.
- * **Hearing protection** (ear plugs, ear muffs) shall be provided where a risk of noise induced hearing loss exists. The need for hearing protection may be assessed through noise monitoring or surveys.
- * **Respiratory protection** (respirators, face masks, cartridge filters) shall be provided where there is a risk of airborne contaminants. This will minimise the risk to of exposure to an atmosphere that is or may be injurious to health.
- * **Hand protection** (gloves, gauntlets) shall be provided where there is an identified hazard associated with a potential for hand injury. A list of hazards shall be compiled for each workplace and suitable hand protection obtained to minimise risk.
- * **Protective footwear** (safety boots, gumboots, enclosed shoes) shall be provided where the nature of the work exposes the employee to a medium to high risk of injury to feet, e.g., occupations such as workshop/maintenance and gardening staff.
- * **Body protection** (high-visibility garments, thermal wear, overalls, aprons, safety harnesses) shall be provided to minimise risk of injury occurring to the body. Examples may include those who are required to work outdoors and are exposed to the sun's rays for continuous periods in a day. Direct exposure of the skin to UV radiation from outdoor work shall be minimised by providing hats, long sleeves/trousers and an adequate supply of sunscreen.
- * **Outer wear** (high visibility safety vests, reflective vests, fluoro jackets) shall be provided to highlight the worker in the area often used where there is a risk of injury associated with working on or near roadways or near moving traffic or moving plant.

6.3 Use

Any protective equipment provided for use should be appropriate for the wearer and that is controls the risk. Protective equipment should be in a clean and hygienic condition for the wearer. This equipment should not be shared between wearers unless the equipment is deemed to be clean.

Any protective equipment used should be stored and located in an appropriate place so that it remains clean and not exposed to the elements. Any storage areas for protective equipment should be clearly identified.

To verify that the equipment protects the user, it should be manufactured according to the specific Australian Standard. There should be a special sticker, label or stamp with the approval on it. The sticker shows the Australian Standards logo as well as quoting the relevant Australian Standards number.

6.4 Maintenance and Storage Requirements

There should be adequate maintenance of PPE to ensure it controls the risk. Maintenance should include regular visual inspection before each use to determine if the equipment has sustained any damage and that it will work as intended. Where PPE is damaged, so that it may not provide the necessary protection, it should be either repaired or disposed of appropriately and replaced.

In circumstances where damage to PPE may be due to either poor selection of equipment or the equipment not conforming to the relevant Australian Standards the PPE shall be replaced. Replacement of PPE will be issued by the local area.

PPE shall be stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Essentially PPE should be stored where it cannot be damaged, deteriorate or be used by another person if it is unhygienic to. PPE should be stored in a location that is readily accessible for workers, students and visitors.

Refer to Appendix 1 for guidance on the maintenance of the relevant PPE.

6.5 Training

Appendix 1 outlines the minimum training or instruction requirement required for the relevant PPE. In some cases, the use of PPE is self-explanatory e.g. wearing glasses, dust masks or hearing protection. In other situations, training or instruction where the equipment is more complicated it is required for the correct fit, use, selection, storage and maintenance of PPE e.g. breathing apparatus, fall arrest equipment.

When training or instruction is to be provided it shall cover:

- * the method for fitting and/or wearing the PPE type
- * the intended application of the PPE
- * information on the locations or activities where the PPE is to be worn.

Further information is provided in Appendix 1.

6.6 Signage

The need for PPE will be communicated via signage at the entrance to the workplace. This will normally include laboratory safety signage on entrance doors and pictograms in areas like workshops.

Required PPE for laboratories will be outlined in the 'precautionary measures required' section of the [Laboratory Hazard Identification Sign](#). Other areas will depict PPE requirements via the example sign below (image of the PPE required on blue background):



Further information is available in the [WHS Communication Guidelines](#).

7 Related Documents

- * [WHS Risk Management Guidelines](#)
- * [Biosafety Manual](#)
- * [Working with Hazardous Chemicals Guidelines](#)
- * [Laboratory Safety Guidelines](#)
- * [Radiation Safety Guidelines](#)
- * [Thermal Comfort Guidelines](#)

8 Reference Documents

- * [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- * [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)

9 Program Review

In order to ensure that these guidelines continue to be effective and applicable to the University, the program will be reviewed every three years by the WHS Unit and relevant stakeholders. Conditions which might warrant a review of the guidelines on a more frequent basis would include:

- * an injury or near miss resulting from failure associated with PPE
- * incidents related to PPE
- * changes to legislation, codes of practice or guidance material * employee or employer concern.

Following completion of any review, the program will be revised and, if necessary, updated in order to correct any deficiencies.

10 Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Approved By	Amendment
1	March 1998	OHS Manager	Initial document created
2	May 2003	OHS Manager	Document updated
3	May 2005	OHS Manager	Document updated
4	May 2007	OHS Manager	Document updated to reflect current requirements
5	August 2010	OHS Manager	Scheduled review. Reference to other documents outlining PPE requirements
6	August 2010	OHS Manager	Document updated to incorporate the Personnel name change to Human Resources Division
7	March 2012	OHS Manager	Rebrand
8	January 2013	Manager WHS	Document updated to include action from a verification audit to develop an inspection, maintenance and testing matrix. WHS Unit name change implemented. Updated legislative changes
9	April 2015	Manager WHS	Updated to meet requirements of the National Audit Tool Version 3
10	July 2016	Manager WHS	Rebrand
11	September 2016	Manager WHS	Updated replacement of PPE requirements.
12	February 2023	Manager WHS	Document updated to incorporate the Human Resources Division name change to People & Culture. Links updated.

11 Appendix 1: Selection, Inspection, Maintenance and Training Requirements

PPE Type	Selection	Inspection Frequency	Maintenance, Replacement and Storage Requirements	Applicable legislation, Codes of Practice or Standards	Minimum Training or Testing Requirements
Clothing					
For general advice regarding occupational protective clothing, refer to AS4501.1 for guidance.					
High visibility safety garments.	Selection recommendations outlined in Appendix C of AS4602.1.	Visual between 3 – 6 months.	<p>Replace when necessary if garment is badly damaged, soiled, faded or the reflective material has ceased to function.</p> <p>No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.</p>	AS4602.1	N/A
Protective clothing for users of handheld chainsaws.	N/A.	Visual - Regular intervals when in storage and after each time of use.	<p>The manufacturer's or supplier's recommendations regarding repair, maintenance, and cleaning of the protective clothing should be observed.</p> <p>All broken or defective fasteners or straps should be repaired before use. Where the protective materials have been damaged or cut by a saw chain, the garment shall be discarded.</p> <p>No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.</p>	AS4453.3	N/A

Clothing for protection against heat and flame.	Selection recommendations outlined in Annex C of AS2801.	Visual - Routine examinations before and after each use.	Routine examinations should include checks for: a) soiling b) contamination from hazardous materials, including biological agents c) physical damage (rips, tears, cuts, missing hardware and closing systems) d) thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, change in colour) e) damaged or missing accessories (reflective trimming, labelling) f) on-going evaluation of system fit and interfaces/overlaps No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS2801.	N/A.
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Eye Protection

Mesh eye and face protectors for occupational applications.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A. No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS1337.2.	N/A.
Filters and eye protectors against laser radiation (laser eye protectors).	Selection recommendations outlined in Annex B AS1337.4.	N/A.	N/A No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS1337.4.	N/A.
Eye protectors for adjustment work on lasers and laser systems (laser adjustment eye protectors).	Selection recommendations outlined in Annex B AS1337.5.	N/A.	N/A. No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS1337.5.	N/A.

Filters for protection against radiation generated in welding and allied operations.	Selection recommendations outlined in Appendix A AS1338.1.	N/A	<p>On visual inspection of the viewing area, filters shall be reasonably free of pits, scratches, greyness, watermarks, bubbles, striae, local aberrations and inclusions which could impair or prevent the use of the filters for their intended purpose.</p> <p>Visual inspection shall be carried out under good illumination against a suitable background with the unaided eye although spectacles may be worn if required.</p> <p>Visual inspection of automatic welding filters shall be carried with the filter in the light state.</p> <p>No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.</p>	AS1338.1.	N/A.
Filters for protection against ultraviolet radiation.	Selection recommendations outlined in Appendix A AS1338.2.	N/A.	<p>N/A.</p> <p>No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.</p>	AS1338.2.	N/A.
Filters for protection against infra-red radiation.	Selection recommendations outlined in Appendix A AS1338.3.	N/A.	<p>N/A</p> <p>No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.</p>	AS1338.3.	N/A.

Footwear

Safety, protective and occupational footwear.	Selection recommendations outlined in Section 2 of AS2210.1.	Visual - Before and after each use. 1.	<p>If there are any cracks, breaks in the leather, exposed toecaps or similar damage that reduces the protective qualities of the footwear, the footwear should be replaced.</p> <p>Guidance on assessing wear outlined in Appendix B of AS2210.1.</p>	AS2210.	N/A.
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			No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.		
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Gloves

Occupational protective gloves.	Selection recommendations outlined in Table 1 of AS2161.1. Refer to the Selection and Use of Gloves Guidelines for further information.	Visual - Before and after each use.	N/A. No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS2161.	For protection against biosafety hazards. Where a risk assessment determines training is required.
Insulating gloves for electrical purposes.	Care should be taken in the selection of other protective gloves, when used in conjunction with insulating gloves for electrical purposes, to ensure that they do not negate the insulation properties of the electrical insulating gloves.	Visual - Before use.	Recommendations for storage, issue and examination of gloves are outlined in <i>Appendix C</i> of AS2225 . No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS2225.	Gloves should be pressure tested for pinholes by sealing the entry to the glove and compressing the air trapped within by rolling the glove on itself. Loss of air indicates that the glove is defective. Gloves found to be defective should not be used.

Headwear

Occupational protective helmets.	User.	Visual inspection at least weekly.	Care and maintenance requirements outlined in Section 3 of AS1800. No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4	AS1800.	N/A.
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Hearing Protection

Acoustics – Hearing Protection	Selection recommendations outlined in Section 6 of AS1269.3	N/A	As outlined by manufacturer. No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS1269.	N/A
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Respiratory Protection

Respiratory protection.	Selection recommendations outlined in Section 4 of AS1715.	Visual - Before and after each use and after cleaning.	Recommendations for the implementation of a respiratory protection program are outlined in Section 2 of AS1715. Maintenance requirements outlined in Section 9 of AS1715 – in particular Table 9.1. No specific storage requirements other than those listed in 6.4.	AS1715. AS1716.	Training requirements outlined in Section 7 of AS1715. Fit tests and check requirements outlined in Section 8 of AS1715.
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Fall Protection

Individual fall arrest systems and devices.	Selection recommendations outlined in Section 2 of AS1891.4	Inspection frequencies outlined in Section 9 of AS1891.4.	As per manufacturer's instructions. No specific storage requirements other than those listed in Section 9 of AS1891.4.	AS1891.1. AS1891.4.	<u>Testing</u> - Schedule of tests for fittings, components and assemblies outlined in Table 1 of AS1891.1. <u>Training</u> - Guidance on the provision of training is outlined in Appendix E of AS1891.4.
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