

Toolbox Talk:
Personal Protective Equipment

Introduction

Laws applicable to the supply and use of PPE:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states:

1. It is the duty of employers to provide PPE where necessary and not to charge for this equipment.

2. It is the duty of employees to:

- Use the PPE as instructed.
- Not to tamper with the PPE supplied.

Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 as amended.

Reason Why

- Provision of PPE is to protect against harm.
- Failure to look after the equipment may render it useless.
- PPE is a last line of defence – if it is not working, employees may be at risk.
- Employees need to know how to obtain, use, inspect, replace and dispose of PPE correctly.

Get the Right PPE for The Job

- Required PPE should always be specified in the risk assessment.
- When PPE is specified, its use is compulsory.
- Look for signs in the workplace designating PPE use:
 - White on blue signs state the mandatory use of PPE.

Employee Responsibility

- All PPE must be inspected before each use.
- Look for signs of wear or damage.
- Apply manufacturer's guidance for test and fit.
- Check the PPE is designed to control the risks that are present (for example, dust or vapours).
- Lost PPE must be reported immediately.

Damaged or Worn PPE

- Damaged or worn PPE must be replaced and **NOT** used.
- Replacement is free-of-charge provided that the employee has not been negligent in its use.
- If manufacturer's guide or risk assessment calls for specific maintenance then this must be carried out (e.g. harness inspections).

Usage

- Make sure you are shown how to use PPE properly – this applies to simple equipment such as ear plugs as much as complicated equipment such as fall arrest protection.

Storage

- Some PPE requires specific arrangements for storage – i.e. filter in respiratory protective equipment (RPE).
- If unsure – ask!
- Make sure storage facilities are available.