



Title:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guide for Control & Safety During COVID-19

Health & Safety
COVID-19 Procedures
UCB-COVID
H&S 001

Employers have duties concerning the provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) at work which will also include the issue of PPE to protect against the chance of contracting the nuevo virus COVID-19 (Coronavirus 2019)

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 is a set of regulations created under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and added safety protection information for the current pandemic should be gained by reviewing government guidelines as set out in GOV.UK COVID-19: infection prevention and control (IPC) for PPE (current revision date of 21 May 2020 – [link below](#))

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is defined in the regulations as *"all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work which protects them against one or more risks to their health and safety"*.

PPE is equipment that will help protect the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

Any risk assessment undertaken should take into account all other control measures available before identifying the protection of PPE as an easy safety solution. PPE should only be used as a final consideration where the use of PPE would lower the risk rating to within or below an acceptable safety level threshold. PPE is a safeguard of last resort since it only protects the individual wearer

Regulation 4 of the 1992 act states:

'Every employer shall ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided to his employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health or safety while at work except where and to the extent that such risk has been adequately controlled by other means which are equally or more effective.'

Making the workplace safe includes providing instructions, procedures, training and supervision to encourage people to work safely and responsibly. Even where engineering controls and safe systems of work have been applied, some hazard of infection from COVID-19 might remain. These include:

- ✓ the lungs – nose/mouth, - breathing in other persons bodily generated aerosol contaminated with COVID-19 – transmission by touch from contaminated surfaces
- ✓ the eyes, - bodily aerosol and 'self touch' from contaminated surfaces
- ✓ the skin, - from 'self touch' transmitted from contaminated surfaces – transmits to eyes, nose, mouth

PPE would be needed in these cases to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 where government guidelines of 2 meter social distancing cannot be maintained. The risk assessment associated with the processes being performed will determine the level of protection of PPE required. All procedures assessed with a risk of 'aerosol generated procedure' (AGP) should receive the highest levels of protection.

All Employers are to ensure that staff are trained on how to use their PPE, that equipment is maintained, repaired and replaced when needed.

Section 9 of the Act makes it clear that **under no circumstances should there be any charge to an employee** requiring PPE equipment, and that the employer should provide all the necessary equipment for free. The equipment must also be regularly checked for damage and effectiveness, with special attention being paid to specific requirements, such as the use-by dates of hard hats.

However; where PPE equipment is lost or mistreated to a stage where it has to be replaced, the University holds the right to recoup losses and charge an individual for the cost of replacement.

If an employee brings an occupational illness claim for developing skin cancer, it would be difficult to find that the employer had breached its health and safety duties if the employer had carried out a risk assessment and offered practical advice to employees.

Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

RPE is to be issued based on the COSHH risk assessment (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002) or assessment based on the treat of a person contracting COVID-19 via the means listed above and based on following government guidelines. The hazard and risk information gathered in the risk assessment is required to select the correct RPE.

RPE must be both adequate and suitable. RPE is available in different sizes to allow for the facial differences of workers. Gender, ethnicity, build and many other factors mean that one size of face piece will not fit everyone.

You will also require RPE that is adequate and suitable to ensure the wearer is protected.

This means:

- ✓ Adequate – It is right for the hazard and reduces exposure to the level required to protect the wearer's health.
- ✓ Suitable – It is right for the wearer, task and environment, such that the wearer can work freely and without additional risks due to the RPE.

All persons are to wear PPE where the risk assessment identifies the need to do so. The risk assessment should identify what is to be worn and where possible, what level/standard of protection is required.

Staff who do not comply with this requirement will be subject to disciplinary action.

Do Employees have to wear PPE?

Here's an example of an employment clause for PPE:

"All employees must comply with their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, section 7. This means they must follow safe systems of work and site rules required to protect your health and safety, including the compulsory use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when deemed necessary through risk assessments, as required by the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. PPE must be worn as required and looked after in accordance with instruction and training. Any loss, failure, or refusal to do so can be treated as gross misconduct and may result in a disciplinary offence, which could ultimately lead to dismissal in serious cases."

There are three legitimate reasons employees may refuse to wear their PPE:

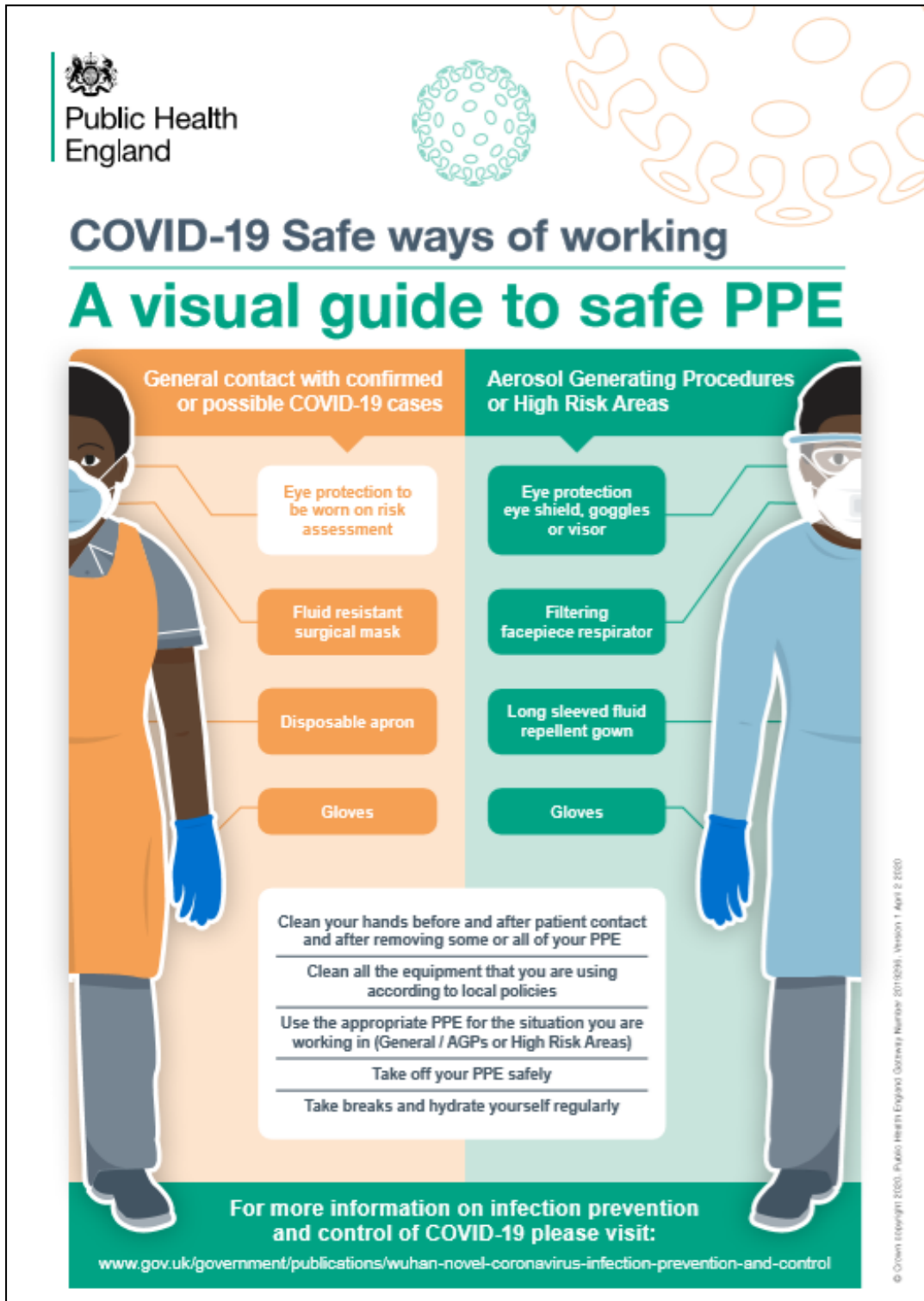
- ✓ A medical condition which makes the PPE uncomfortable or harmful to wear.
- ✓ Ill-fitting PPE that compromises safety.
- ✓ Followers of the Sikh faith who wear a turban – are exempt from wearing head protection when working on construction sites.

Where a person cannot wear suitable PPE for procedures involving close exposure and/or contact with other persons whilst not maintaining a social distancing of 2 meters to protect against the chance of contracting COVID-19 virus the person shall not be instructed to conduct that task.

References:

- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 - L25 (Third edition) Published 2015
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l25.pdf>
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at work - A brief guide
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf>
- The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 -
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulation (EU) 2016/425 (New Regulations 2018)
- Respiratory protective equipment at work - HSG53
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg53.pdf>
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) - L5 (Sixth edition) Published 2013 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l5.pdf>

- Risk assessments - A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace - INDG163(rev4), published 08/14 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>
- GOV.UK Guidance - COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) Updated 21 May 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>



Public Health England

COVID-19 Safe ways of working

A visual guide to safe PPE

General contact with confirmed or possible COVID-19 cases

- Eye protection to be worn on risk assessment
- Fluid resistant surgical mask
- Disposable apron
- Gloves

Aerosol Generating Procedures or High Risk Areas

- Eye protection eye shield, goggles or visor
- Filtering facepiece respirator
- Long sleeved fluid repellent gown
- Gloves

Clean your hands before and after patient contact and after removing some or all of your PPE

Clean all the equipment that you are using according to local policies

Use the appropriate PPE for the situation you are working in (General / AGPs or High Risk Areas)

Take off your PPE safely

Take breaks and hydrate yourself regularly

For more information on infection prevention and control of COVID-19 please visit:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control

© Crown copyright 2020. Public Health England. Outbreak Number: 20190391. Version 1. April 21 2020