

PPE:

Your Employer Must Provide It Free

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2022) — when PPE is required, your employer's duty to provide it at no cost, correct use and replacement.

 Last reviewed: August 2026  HSE · PPE at Work Regs 1992 (amended 2022)  England, Scotland and Wales ukworkrights.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, similar duties come from Northern Ireland's own health and safety law. Contact HSENI (Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland), not the HSE.

PPE at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended 2022)

- PPE is **any equipment designed to protect the wearer** against health or safety risks — helmets, gloves, eye protection, hi-vis, respiratory protective equipment (RPE), safety footwear
- From **6 April 2022**, the PPE duty was extended to **include workers** (not just employees)
- Your employer must provide **suitable PPE free of charge** — you must not be charged for it
- PPE must be **properly maintained**, stored and replaced when worn or damaged
- You must be **trained** on how to use and maintain your PPE
- PPE is always the **last resort** — other control measures must be tried first

✓ NO CHARGE

Since 2022, zero hours workers and other workers (not just employees) must be provided PPE free of charge. If your employer is charging you for PPE — that is unlawful.

Common PPE and when it's needed

PPE TYPE	WHEN REQUIRED
Hard hat	Risk of falling objects — construction, warehousing
Safety footwear	Risk of foot injury from falling objects, sharp materials
Hi-vis	Working near vehicles or in low visibility conditions
Gloves	Chemical exposure, cuts, vibration, heat
Eye protection	Flying particles, chemicals, UV radiation
RPE	Dust, fumes, vapours exceeding WELs
Hearing protection	Noise above 85 dB(A)

▲ RIGHT PPE FOR THE RISK

Generic gloves are not the same as chemical-resistant gloves. The PPE must be **suitable for the specific risk** identified in the risk assessment.

Using PPE correctly

- You must **use PPE as trained and instructed** by your employer
- You must **inspect PPE before each use** — check for damage, wear, or contamination
- Report **damaged or missing PPE** to your supervisor immediately
- Store PPE correctly — poor storage degrades protective properties
- Never **modify or tamper** with PPE
- If PPE is uncomfortable or ill-fitting — tell your employer. Ill-fitting PPE can be more dangerous than none at all
- You **cannot be forced** to buy your own PPE or accept PPE deductions from your wages

FIT MATTERS

PPE must fit the individual — particularly RPE and hearing protection. Face-fit testing is required for tight-fitting respirators. If you have a beard, some masks won't seal correctly — ask about alternatives.

Frequently asked questions

Q Can my employer deduct the cost of PPE from my wages?

No. PPE required by law must be provided free of charge. Deducting PPE costs from wages is unlawful. If this is happening to you, raise a grievance and contact ACAS on 0300 123 1100.

Q What if I lose or damage my PPE?

If it was accidental, your employer must replace it — they cannot refuse to provide PPE because of a previous accident. If the damage or loss was through deliberate misuse, your employer may have grounds to address it disciplinarily, but they still cannot leave you without protection.

Q Do I have to wear PPE even if I think it's unnecessary?

If your employer requires PPE based on a risk assessment, you must wear it. If you genuinely believe the assessment is wrong, raise it through your safety rep or HSE — but continue wearing the PPE in the meantime. Refusing to wear required PPE may be a disciplinary matter.

Q What about PPE for pregnant workers?

Pregnancy changes the risk profile — some PPE won't fit and some risks increase. Your employer must carry out an individual risk assessment for a pregnant worker and provide suitable PPE or adjust the role accordingly.

Delivery notes & attendance record

Before you start

PPE is the last line of defence, not the first. Check fit, not just presence — badly fitting PPE is close to no PPE. Remind people it must be free.

Questions to ask the team

1. Has anyone been asked to pay for PPE, or had it deducted from wages?
2. Does your PPE actually fit, including anyone who needs a different size or fit?
3. What do you do when PPE is damaged or worn out?
4. Could the hazard be removed so the PPE was not needed at all?

The law behind this talk

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended 2022, extending duties to limb (b) workers); Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.9 (no charge for PPE)

Employers must give workers comprehensible information, instruction and training on the risks they face — Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2(2)(c) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg. 10. Keep the record below as evidence that you did.

Attendance record

Topic

PPE: Your Employer Must Provide It Free

Date

Site / location

Delivered by

Actions agreed

Next talk due

Attendees

Name

Signature

Use the Print handout button to print this record. General guidance only, not legal advice. This toolbox talk is generic material and is not a substitute for a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent person. Employers remain responsible for their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

FREE H&S GUIDANCE

PPE Guidance

free guidance

Get plain-English guidance on your rights and your employer's legal duties.

HSE ADVISORY TEAM

0300 003 1747

hse.gov.uk

ACAS

0300 123 1100

acas.org.uk

CITIZENS ADVICE

0800 144 8848

citizensadvice.org.uk

UK WORK RIGHTS

PPE Guidance

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-ppe.html

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