Personal Protective Equipment — study guide

PPE is the last line of defence between a hazard and a person. It only works if it is the right kit, correctly fitted, properly maintained and actually used. This guide covers the definition, the responsibilities and the requirements.[1]

Definition

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is defined as "all **equipment** which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which **protects** them against one or more **risks** to their health or safety, and any additional or accessory designed to meet that objective".

Employee responsibilities

Employees must use PPE in accordance with the employer's and manufacturer's instructions, return PPE after use to an appropriate storage location, and report any loss of, or damage to, PPE.

Training

PPE users must receive training in how to correctly **fit and wear** PPE, the **limitations** of the equipment, and the **proper use** of PPE.

Selecting PPE

Effective protection is only achieved by suitable PPE that is correctly fitted and maintained, and used properly. When assessing the suitability of PPE, consider the length of time the PPE must be worn, the hazards of the job, and the health of individual employees. If more than one item of PPE is worn, the items must be **compatible** with each other: when used together, all items must adequately control the risks against which they are provided to protect.

Regulatory requirements

Under Flag State regulations, PPE must be maintained and stored correctly, must be properly assessed before use to ensure it is suitable, and must be used correctly. "**Core**" PPE includes a hard hat, fire-resistant coveralls, eye protection, safety footwear, gloves and hearing protection.

Key facts to remember

- PPE = equipment worn or held at work that protects against risks to health or safety.
- Employee: use per employer/manufacturer instructions, return to storage, report loss/damage.
- Training: correct fit and wear, limitations, proper use.
- Suitability: duration of wear, hazards of the job, individual employee's health.

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- Multiple items must be compatible and together must control the risks.
- Flag State: maintain/store correctly, assess suitability before use, use correctly.
- "Core" PPE: hard hat, fire-resistant coveralls, eye protection, safety footwear, gloves, hearing protection.

Sources

1. Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (COSWP) — Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) (personal protective equipment).
2. Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (as amended) — provision of personal protective equipment and a safe working environment.