

# Personal Protective Equipment Procedure

Prepared by NSS Safety Working Group  
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## Index

SECTION		PAGE
1.	Introduction	4
2	Organisation	4
3	Definitions	4-5
4	Roles and Responsibilities	6-8
5	Training and Education	9
6	Occupational Health	9
7	NSS Internal Support	9
8	External Sources of Help	9
9	Sign Off and Review	10

## 1. Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of all current statutory European and United Kingdom health and safety legislation, National Services Scotland (NSS) recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer to ensure as far as reasonably practicable the health, safety and wellbeing of all our staff and anyone else who may be affected by our business undertakings, including in particular patients, donors, visitors and contractors.

To this end as a responsible employer, NSS employ Health and Safety Professionals to regularly audit, monitor and review all of its premises throughout Scotland, against the NSS Health and Safety Performance Management System. A key element of which, is to ensure that, in line with the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken for all hazards associated with its work activities. Subsequently NSS shall ensure that all safe systems of work developed in line with the findings of these risk assessments are robustly enforced, including the supply and wearing of Personal Protective Equipment. This is to ensure that NSS meets its legal obligation under the Health and Safety at Work (etc) Act 1974 and the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

This Occupational Health and Safety procedure is a crucial element of the overall NSS Occupational Health and Safety Performance Management System and should be implemented by all Divisions/Sites as an integral part of the operational requirements of the business for which they are responsible. The procedure will be reviewed at least every two years from the date issued or following any significant changes to statutory legislation or to the H&S Organisational Structure and Management Arrangements affecting the implementation and application of this procedure.

## 2. Organisation

This procedure supports the over arching NSS Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy which clearly sets out the organisational framework and management arrangements under which, clear lines of accountability and the specific health and safety roles and responsibilities of management, staff and various health and safety committees are identified.

Under these arrangements NSS Divisional Directors, Senior Managers and Line Managers will ensure, that where a risk to a persons health or safety cannot be adequately controlled by other means which are equally or more effective, suitable and appropriate personal protective equipment is identified, provided free of charge and suitably maintained.

Any breach of this procedure may be regarded as an offence and the member(s) of staff may be subject to investigation in accordance with the NSS Disciplinary Policy.

## 3. Definitions

Below are the definitions and descriptions of key terms and phrases which relate specifically to the implementation and application of this procedure.

### Personal Protective Equipment

All equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) 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 addition or accessory designed to meet that objective.

Some examples are:

- Gloves
- Safety boots/shoes
- High-visibility clothing
- Safety glasses/goggles
- Full face visors
- Weatherproof clothing
- Safety harnesses
- Ear defenders
- Respiratory equipment (face masks etc)
- Coverall/apron

#### Suitable Personal Protective Equipment

Simply that it is fit for purpose and appropriate to effectively and efficiently protect the individual from exposure to the hazard without introducing other significant risks. Points to consider are

- appropriate for the environment in which it is to be worn e.g. heavy clothing in a hot environment would introduce other significant risks
- appropriate to the period for which it is to be worn e.g. a face mask worn for 4 hours
- Takes account of the state of health of the person
- Takes account of the space around the workplace
- Fits the wearer correctly e.g. a loose face mask allowing dust in
- Complies with the appropriate standards e.g. BS or EN
- Compatible with other PPE and clothing the person is required to wear

#### Staff who may need to wear PPE

The list below is not exclusive and managers need to identify locally, any persons exposed to the particular hazards associated with the work activities within their area of responsibility and decide on the specific PPE required.

- Cleaners, Lab staff or maintenance staff when working with chemicals e.g. gloves
- Employees working alongside vehicles e.g. high-visibility clothing
- Employees moving and handling loads e.g. safety boots/shoes

#### Engineering Controls

Where the risk to which people are exposed is reduced to as low as reasonably practicable by using collective control measures, so avoiding the need for wearing PPE

- Dust/vapours e.g. local exhaust ventilation (LEV),
- Noise e.g. use of noise baffling materials / segregation

#### Hierarchy of Controls

The principle to be applied is to always implement collective measures where possible to reduce or control the risk before deciding on PPE, as its purpose only to protect the individual. The order of priority that should be applied when deciding on the appropriate level of control measures required is:

- Eliminate
- Reduce
- Isolate
- Control
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Discipline

For more details of the hierarchy of controls please see the NSS Risk Assessment Procedure

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

These are the definitions and descriptions of key roles and responsibilities of NSS management, staff and others which relate specifically to the implementation and application of this procedure.

##### Chief Executive

As the most senior person in NSS, has ultimate responsibility and accountability for the health and safety of all NSS employees. However as identified in the NSS Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy overall management of health and safety at work is delegated by the Chief Executive to Divisional Directors and Senior Managers who are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of staff, visitors, donors and contractors within their area of control.

##### Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee (OHSAC)

As the governing body for health and safety in NSS, OHSAC will review, endorse and subsequently authorise all new documented Occupational Health and Safety Procedures developed by the Safety Working Group, before they are released to the business.

##### Safety Working Group

Develop and review, in Partnership, all NSS Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures in line with all European and UK Health and Safety Legislation and current best practice to assist the Organisation in meeting its statutory obligations.

##### Divisional Director / Senior Managers

Responsible and accountable for the health and safety of all staff and anyone else who may be affected by the work activities associated with their area of control. Specific duties required under this procedure are -

- Ensuring that a Occupational Health and Safety Organisational Structure and appropriate Management Arrangements are in place to ensure all aspects of health and safety are suitably managed, including the provision and safe use of personal protective equipment associated with the work activities for which they are responsible.
- Ensuring Divisional Line Managers and Supervisors are provided with adequate time and resources to effectively manage all health and safety matters, including the provision and safe use of personal protective equipment, as an integral part of the operational requirements, necessary to the business undertakings for which they have line management responsibility.
- Ensuring Divisional Line Managers and Supervisors are provided with adequate health and safety information, instruction, and training on their roles and responsibilities, including effectively communicating this procedure.
- Ensuring Divisional Line Managers and Supervisors effectively and efficiently carry out their health and safety roles and responsibilities with respect to this procedure

### Divisional Line Managers / Supervisors

Responsible for the day to day implementation of NSS health and safety policies, procedures and safe systems of work. Specific duties required under this procedure are to –

- Ensure that where a risk assessment deems PPE necessary, it is
  - Provided free of charge
  - Selected in consultation with the employees, other internal resources and where appropriate external expertise
  - Suitably maintained by a competent person e.g. appropriately trained staff or qualified third-party where required records of maintenance and inspection are kept
  - Inspected in line with any specific statutory requirements and in line with the manufacturers recommendations
  - Provided with suitable and appropriate storage facilities
  - Replaced if found to be defective and beyond repair or has reached the end of its shelf life.
- Ensure staff are provided with adequate health and safety information, instruction, training and supervision on their roles & responsibilities, including effectively communicating this procedure.
- Ensure where needed any health surveillance requirements are met e.g. releasing staff for lung function tests or audiometry testing and following up on any issues.
- Ensure any changes to work as a result of introducing PPE, are also reflected in the relevant safe system of work documentation such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- Ensure any Safe System of Work with respect to the wearing and maintenance of PPE is rigorously enforced.

### Competent Risk Assessor

Appointed competent member of staff who has completed the NSS risk assessment course provided by Healthy Working Lives and approved by OHSAC. Specific duties under this procedure are –

- Apply the hierarchy of controls before considering the need for PPE ensuring that priority is always given to implementing collective engineering control measures prior to introducing protective equipment for an individual.
- Where PPE is required:
  - Identify the type and specification of PPE required to protect the person from the hazard(s) e.g. gloves – surgical/chemical/industrial
  - Consider the suitability of the PPE
  - Consider the health and safety implications of staff
  - Consider the compatibility of the PPE with other clothing and PPE
- Where PPE is not required no reference should be made to its use in the risk assessment or safe system of work documents, statements such as safety gloves are available if required are not acceptable as a suitable control measure, therefore if PPE is not required don't refer to it in the document.

Please refer to the NSS Risk Assessment Procedure for further duties of competent risk assessors

### NSS National Health and Safety Advisors

Appointed competent members of staff who have completed or are working towards a professional health and safety qualification e.g. NEBOSH Diploma or equivalent and who are responsible for providing expert health and safety advice and support to all NSS staff specific duties under this policy are -

- Provide expert advice, guidance and support to management and staff across the Organisation on all health and safety matters including the safe use of PPE.
- Audit NSS Divisional/Site Health and Safety Committee Action Plans against the NSS Performance Management System, a key element of which is to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken to control the risks associated with its work activities, including the supply and safe use of PPE.

### Divisional/Site H&S Advisors & Staff Side Reps

Appointed competent members of staff who have completed or are working towards an HSE or Trade Union recognised training course on health and safety e.g. NEBOSH Certificate or equivalent, and who provide health and safety advice and support to staff at a local level. Specific duties under this procedure are -

- Assist management and staff by providing practical support and guidance on current best practice in relation to the safe use of PPE.

### Other Sources Internal/External

Competent persons from inside or outside the Organisation with a particular level of knowledge or expertise which may be required to provide necessary information and training on the selection and use of appropriate PPE.

### Employees

All staff must comply with this procedure and follow safe systems of work developed from risk assessments and co-operate with management to assist NSS in meeting their statutory obligations in relation to health and safety. Specific duties under this procedure include,

- Wear the appropriate PPE provided for their protection as per work instructions
- Must not misuse, interfere or alter the PPE in any way that could affect its ability to protect the person
- Regularly inspect and maintain the PPE in line with the manufacturers instructions and report any issues or defects to their line manager at the earliest opportunity
- Comply with any health surveillance requirements associated with the use of PPE e.g. lung function tests or audiometry testing
- Take part in any face fit tests for respiratory protective equipment
- Provide medical documentation for any specific requirements in relation to the provision of PPE e.g. prescription safety glasses
- Identify and report any areas of concern associated with wearing the PPE to management e.g. comfort issues or anything affecting how the work is normally carried out such as compatibility issues

### Non Employees/Volunteers

Non Employees and volunteers must ensure they are aware of the local H&S arrangements at the site they are working and comply with all NSS policies and procedures when undertaking any work on behalf of NSS.



## 5. Training and Education

Staff must be provided with adequate information, instruction training and supervision on the safe use of the PPE including the inspection and maintenance requirements.

## 6. Occupational Health

There is no direct requirement for Occupational Health involvement in the implementation or application of this procedure however there may be a requirement for certain staff who rely on PPE for their work to undergo specific health checks. This is to ensure the suitability and effectiveness of the PPE and subsequent occupational health, safety and wellbeing of these staff. Occupational Health should be consulted if managers or staff have any concerns about an individual's fitness to undertake such work where the wearing of particular PPE is required. Occupational Health will then advise on their fitness based on any medical conditions and these staff will be subject to periodic examination to ensure their continuing fitness for such work. Examples of such health checks would be,

- Audiometry testing for individuals working in an area where the noise levels require the mandatory wearing of ear defenders
- Hand skin surveillance for staff who may suffer from Dermatological problems due to possible exposure to harmful substances or sensitisers.
- Lung function tests on staff who require to wear respiratory protective equipment as a routine part of their work

## 7. NSS Internal Support

Should members of staff have any difficulties with understanding any aspect of this procedure, or require further information in respect of accessibility, interpretation or application of the procedure, they should contact their:

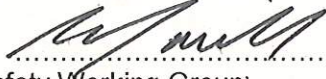
- Line Manager
- Local Health and Safety Committee Chair & Committee Reps
- Local Health and Safety Advisor & Trade Union H&S Rep
- Healthy Working Lives contacts, Health and Safety Advisors
- Healthy Working Lives contacts, email; [healthyworkinglives@nhs.net](mailto:healthyworkinglives@nhs.net)  
Health and Safety 0131 275 7671, Occupational Health 0131 275 6176
- Help is also available via the Healthy Working Lives Website on geNSS where other NSS policies, procedures and guidance documents can be found.

## 8. External Sources of Help

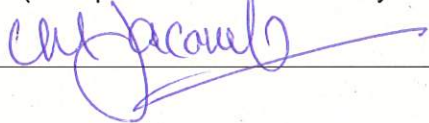
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- Health and Safety at Work (etc) Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

**9. Sign Off and Review Date**

Date Procedure is effective

Reviewed By:  Date: 20 August 2012  
Chair, NSS Safety Working Group

Agreed by:  Date: 20 August 2012  
Chair, OHSAC (Occupational Health & Safety Advisory Committee)



20 August 2012