Royal Holloway University of London

Department of Geography

**POLICY FOR SAFE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

**This document is applicable to all staff, students and visitors using the laboratories. It is also applicable to those staff and students who require the use of PPE on field work.**

**All work must be carried out in accordance with Geography procedures and risk assessments.**

Under the PPE at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended), PPE should be regarded as the last resort to protect against risks to health and safety. Managers must, therefore, ensure that through a process of risk assessment consideration is first given to the use of engineering controls and safe systems of work. In the event that after consideration of the above, there is still a risk, PPE will need to be provided.

The following principles for controlling risk should be applied, preferably in the following order:

* try a less risky option
* prevent access to the hazard
* organise/adapt work to reduce exposure to the hazard
* if after all the above there is still a risk, provide appropriate PPE

Once it is established that PPE is required it is the responsibility of the laboratory manager to select and provide the equipment appropriate for control of the particular risks involved and the circumstances of its use. This should be achieved through a risk assessment of the work activities and hazards.

**Hazards and Types of PPE:**

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|  | **Hazards**  | **Options** |
| **Eyes** | Chemicals, dust, projectiles, gas and vapour | Safety spectacles, goggles, face shields, visors |
| **Head** | Falling rocks and debris | Hard hats  |
| **Ears** | Noise | Ear defenders |
| **Lungs**  | Dust, vapour, gas | Disposable masks, respirators with permanent or disposable filter units |
| **Body/legs** | Chemical/liquid spills | White coat, rubber apron  |
| **Hands/arms** | Burns, chemicals, abrasion, impact, vibration, contamination, entanglement | Heat proof gloves, disposable gloves, chemical resistant gloves, gauntlets, wrist cuffs, armlets |
| **General**  | Moving vehicles | Hi-visibility clothing |

When selecting PPE consider the following factors:

1. Is the PPE appropriate for the risks involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the risk may occur?
2. Does the PPE prevent or adequately control the risks involved without increasing the overall level of risk?
3. Can the equipment be adjusted to fit the wearer correctly? Consider the size, fit and weight of the PPE. If the users help choose it, they will be more likely to use it.
4. Has the state of health of the person who will be wearing the PPE been taken into account?
5. What are the needs of the work and the demands it places on the wearer? For example, the length of time the PPE needs to be worn, the physical effort required to do the job and the requirements for visibility and communication.
6. If more than one item of PPE is being worn, are they compatible with each other? For example, does a particular type of respirator make it difficult to get eye protection to fit correctly?

**CE marking of Personal Protective Equipment**

Managers must ensure that any PPE provided within their Department bears the ‘CE’ mark and complies with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002, concerning the design or manufacture of PPE with regard to health and safety. Confirmation as to whether PPE conforms to these requirements can be obtained from the supplier.

Note: PPE which was placed on the market before 1st July 1995 and is still suitable for the use to which it is being put and is properly maintained, does not need to be CE marked.

**Maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment**

**Laboratory managers must** ensure that all personal protective equipment is maintained or replaced, kept in an efficient clean state and that replacement parts (filters, inserts) are readily available.

Where possible follow manufacturer’s recommendations on maintenance schedules, replacement periods and shelf lives.

**PPE users are responsible for** checking the condition of their PPE prior to each use, and that any needs for replacement/major repair are brought to the laboratory manager’s attention without delay. More intricate repairs should be undertaken by personnel with the technical knowledge (i.e. contract services from manufacturers or suppliers).

 **PPE users must** take reasonable care of PPE – using it in accordance and within operating limits, as advised by manufacturer’s instructions and ensuring consumables are maintained to support their on-going use (i.e. filters, cases, covers, straps etc.); c**omply with the requirements** of all relevant policies; r**eport any loss or obvious defect** immediately to a laboratory manager; r**eport any concerns** relating to the suitability of the PPE to their manager or supervisor immediately.

Each type of PPE must be maintained according to the recommendations listed in appendix 1.

**Storage and disposal of PPE**

Appropriate storage of PPE when not in use will protect from:

Chemical damage, sunlight (UV damage and deterioration), high humidity, high temperature, accidental knocks, contamination from dust or dirt, loss or theft.

Storage will depend on the type of PPE however the following is advisable:

Visors, gloves, masks and ear defenders should be stored in a clean, dry and, where possible, dark space.

Safety glasses/goggles should be stored in a box or case.

When disposing of PPE unsuitable for future use due to irreparable damage, items must be destroyed before disposal to prevent retrieval and reuse by others.

**Information, Instruction and training**

Laboratory managers have the responsibility to ensure that everyone required to wear PPE is competent to do so, having received suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training (including refresher training) to enable them to make effective use of the PPE provided. The extent of the instruction and training will vary with the complexity and performance of the equipment, how frequently it is used, and the needs of the people being trained.

Training should be carried out in accordance with any recommendations and instructions supplied by the PPE manufacturer.

Checks of work areas should be undertaken to ensure compliance with PPE use and non-compliance investigated.

**It is never acceptable to exempt use of PPE for work that “only takes a few minutes”**

**Also refer to the following documents for further guidance:**

Geography Department: Laboratory Operating Systems, Policies and Procedures

RHUL Policy and Procedure for Provision and Use of PPE

APPENDIX 1:

**Maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment provided by the department**

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| **Item** | **Guidance – examination/cleaning/testing** | **Frequency** |
| Safety spectacles / visors / face shields | Wipe with a clean cloth | After each use |
| Check lenses:Cracked, scratched or damaged lenses must not be used and the entire units replaced. | Prior to each use |
| Check frames:Cracked and damaged frames must not be used and entire units replaced. | Prior to each use |
| Ear plugs | Use disposable ear plugs wherever possible  | On each use |
| Ear defenders  | Check foam insulation for splits, damage or deterioration.Check ear cups for damage, cracking or deterioration.Check headband is fully functional Wipe with a clean damp cloth – do not immerse in water  | Prior to each useAfter each use |
| Hard hats  | Check internal bands and cushioning for splits and deterioration | Prior to each use |
| Check outer shell for cracks and damage Following an accident/incident that may have damaged the outer shell the helmet must be replaced. | Prior to each use When applicable |
| Disposable masks. | Check straps are attached and adjustable where applicableWith the exception of single use masks, replace in accordance with manufacturers advice or following extended periods of non-use. | Prior to use |
| Respirators with permanent or disposable filter units. | Check filters are still “in date” and fitted correctly | Prior to use  |
| White coat | Check for tears, or loose fabric that could catch on machinery. Carefully check pockets for hazardous items.Used laboratory coats should periodically be sent for cleaning by a College approved supplier.If a coat becomes contaminated it must be sent for cleaning. | Prior to usePrior to useWhen applicable |
| Specialist protective clothing e.g. heat proof gloves, chemical aprons | Check for tears, perforations or signs of wear | Prior to each use |
| Gloves, gauntlets, mitts, wrist cuffs, armlets | Check for holes or tears.With the exception of single use items, replace in accordance with manufacturers advice or following extended periods of non-use. | Prior to each use. |
| Hi-visibility clothing | Check for large holes and tears. Small holes are acceptable if the clothing still provides a suitable level of visibility. Wash or wipe down to remove any dirt | Prior to each useAfter each use |