

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE is equipment or clothing designed to protect workers from harm. In retail, PPE might include gloves for handling chemicals, safety shoes for loading areas, or high-visibility vests for working near vehicles. PPE is the last line of defence – it does not remove hazards but protects when risks cannot be eliminated or reduced.

Managing the risk

- Provide PPE only where other controls cannot eliminate or reduce risks.
- Ensure PPE meets relevant standards and is fit for purpose.
- Store PPE cleanly and replace damaged or worn items.
- Train workers in correct PPE use and care.

Do

- Provide PPE that meets required standards.
- Train workers in how to use PPE correctly.
- Replace damaged or worn PPE immediately.
- Ensure PPE is clean and stored properly.
- Reinforce PPE use as part of professional practice.

Good practice

- Maintain stock of well-fitting PPE.
- Include PPE checks in inspections.
- Managers should model correct PPE use.
- Thank and reinforce workers for proper PPE use.

Don't

- Treat PPE as a substitute for other safety measures.
- Ignore worn or damaged PPE.
- Expect workers to buy their own PPE.
- Overlook PPE checks in inspections.
- Use PPE incorrectly or inconsistently.

Employee checklist

- PPE provided for high-risk tasks.
- PPE meets standards and fits properly.
- PPE is clean and in good condition.
- Workers trained in PPE use and care.
- Damaged PPE replaced promptly.