

Key Risk Area (KRA)

KRA 1.5 PPE and Protective Clothing

1. Purpose

This document provides guidance on the requirements and practices for the management of personal protective equipment (PPE) to assist with correct selection, supply, use, replacement, maintenance, training and storage.

2. Scope

This Guideline applies to all health, safety and wellbeing activities of staff, students, visitors (including volunteers and contractors), Council members, and other persons interacting with the University of Newcastle (workers); the operations of staff of University aligned Research Centres and controlled entities; and all activities conducted by or on behalf of the University of Newcastle on and outside of the University's campuses.

3. Guidelines

3.1. PPE in the Hierarchy of Controls

The general Health and Safety Risk Assessment Form should be used to assess all hazards for University tasks in accordance with the Guideline [HSG 3.1 Health and Safety Risk Management](#). When considering risk controls, PPE is the lowest level of control measure in the hierarchy of controls for the following reasons:

- The hazards and risks remain;
- The issue of effectiveness in relation to proper fit and design for different individuals; and
- PPE can sometimes be awkward, uncomfortable and limiting, which may make Workers less likely to use such equipment.

However, the use of PPE can complement other higher level control measures, thereby increasing personal protection. All PPE provided by the University will comply with current legal requirements, and where appropriate, the relevant Australian Standard.

3.2. Selection of PPE

The selection of appropriate PPE for a task must be based on a risk assessment. The decision-making process can be supported by other sources of information including:

- Designers, manufacturers or suppliers of PPE, who can give advice on the specifications and appropriate use of their products;
- Australian Standards;
- Safety Data Sheets;
- SOPs, SWMSs, job safety analysis.

It is important to ensure the correct selection of clothing and/or equipment, as not all PPE will meet the same performance requirements and provide the same protection.

3.3. Specific PPE risk controls

Circumstances in which certain types of PPE will be required to be provided and worn include:

Head protection (Hard Hats): will be provided and must be worn where there is a possibility a person may be struck on the head by a falling object, a person may strike their head against a fixed object or there may be inadvertent head contact with electrical hazards. Head protection must comply with Australian Standards AS/NZS 1800:1998 Occupational protective helmets - Selection, care and use and AS/NZS 1801:1997 Occupational protective helmets. Hard hats must be stored away from windows and sunlight, inspected regularly (or before next use) and replaced if the shell has faded or has other damage. The headband should be replaced if the plastic or the cloth sweatband has deteriorated.

Eye protection: will be provided and must be worn where there is a risk of eye injury. Typical hazards might include flying particles, dust, splashing substances, harmful gases, vapours, aerosols, lasers and high intensity radiation from welding operations.

Eye protection includes safety glasses (including prescription safety glasses), safety goggles or face shields. Prescription safety glasses will be provided for Workers, honours and post graduate research students where prescription glasses have to be worn by those persons to carry out the inherent duties of their job or the relevant research work and where it is not reasonably practicable to wear safety glasses over the top of their normal prescription eye wear.

Safety glasses must be worn in all University laboratories unless lesser requirements can be justified by a risk assessment as outlined in AS 2243.1:2021: Safety in laboratories -

Planning and operational aspects. All safety eyewear MUST comply with AS/NZS 1336:2014 Eye and face protection - Guidelines, AS/NZS 1337.1:2010 Personal eye protection – Eye and face protectors for occupational applications and AS/NZS 1338.1:2012 Filters for eye protectors, and the eye equipment must be appropriately stamped with the correct Australian Standard code.

Hearing protection: will be provided and must be worn where there is a risk of noise induced hearing loss. Typically, this is associated with the use of equipment including sonicators and heavy machinery. The need for hearing protection shall be assessed via conducting noise surveys in potential noise hazard areas. Hearing protection can include ear plugs or earmuffs and must comply with AS/NZS 1269.3:2005 Occupational noise management - Hearing protector program. See also [KRA 1.6 Noise Management](#).

Respiratory protection: will be provided and must be worn where there is a risk of exposure to an atmosphere that is or may be injurious to health. Respiratory protection includes disposable masks, particulate respirators, half face respirators, full face respirators and supplied air respirators. All respiratory protection use requires appropriate training. Some respiratory protection equipment requires regular testing and certification. Respiratory protection must comply with AS/NZS 1715:2009 Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment and AS/NZS 1716:2012 Respiratory protective devices.

Protective clothing and sunscreen: will be provided and must be used by Workers and students who are required to work outdoors and are exposed to the sun's rays for continuous periods. Direct exposure of the skin to UV radiation from outdoor work will be minimised by providing hats, long sleeves/trousers and an adequate supply of sunscreen. Protective clothing and personal insecticide may also be provided for Workers and students conducting activities outdoors.

Laboratory coats/gowns (including disposable): will be provided for Workers and visitors working in or visiting laboratories or associated facilities and must be worn. Schools and facilities shall have a de-contamination and laundering procedure in place to ensure this clothing is maintained to an acceptable condition. Laboratory coats may be provided to undergraduate students at the discretion of the School and, if students are required to provide their own coats/gowns, the School must provide clear instruction relating to the safe transport, decontamination and laundering of this clothing. Laboratory gowns or buttoned lab coats are required to be worn in all University laboratories unless lesser requirements can be justified by a risk assessment as outlined in AS 2243.1:2021 Safety in laboratories - Planning and operational aspects.

Minimum requirements for PPE in a University laboratory are laboratory clothing (lab gown), protective eyewear (safety glasses) and closed shoes unless lesser requirements can be justified by a risk assessment as outlined in AS 2243.1:2021: Safety in laboratories - Planning and operational aspects.

Hand protection: will be provided and must be worn where there is an identified hazard associated with a potential for hand injury. Hazards include chemicals, biological substances, radiation, cryogenic material, high temperature material and apparatus, sharps and manual work e.g. gardening, cleaning. It is recommended that the use of latex gloves be minimised due to the risk of sensitisation and allergy. Careful selection is required to ensure glove type is suitable, and this should comply with AS/NZS 2161.1:2016 Occupational protective gloves – Selection, use and maintenance.

Protective footwear (safety footwear): will be provided and must be worn where there is a risk of harm to feet. This may apply particularly to workshop, maintenance or gardening Workers. Protective footwear must comply with AS/NZS 2210.1:2010 Safety, protective and occupational footwear – Guide to selection, care and use. Enclosed, impermeable shoes must be worn in all University laboratories unless lesser requirements can be justified by a risk assessment as outlined in AS 2243.1:2021 Safety in laboratories – Planning and operational aspects. Some University facilities require disposable booties (provided) to be worn over enclosed shoes as part of infection control or clean room protocols.

High visibility safety vests: will be provided and must be worn where there is a risk of injury associated with working on or near roadways or near moving traffic or moving plant.

Life Jackets (Personal Floatation Devices, or PFDs): will be provided and must be worn where there is a risk of harm through drowning, such as when boating. PFDs must comply with AS 4758.1:2022: Lifejackets – General requirements, and there must be enough PFDs provided and of appropriate sizing to cater for all persons on board vessels at all times.

Face Protection (e.g. face shields): will be provided and must be worn where there is a risk of facial injury associated with a task, such as when working with liquid nitrogen. Face protection must comply with AS/NZS 1337.1:2010 Personal eye protection – Eye and face protectors for occupational applications.

Protective Lead Aprons: will be provided and must be worn and maintained where indicated in the approved SOP(s) for x-ray producing equipment in compliance with AS/NZS 4543.3:2000 – Protective devices against diagnostic medical X-radiation. The use of

protective lead aprons should occur in consultation with the University Radiation Safety Advisor.

Fall prevention equipment: will be provided and must be used in accordance with any applicable safe working at heights guidelines. Refer to the [KRA 3.1 Working at Height](#) and Code of Practice: Managing the Risk of Falls at Workplaces for further information.

Personal security alarms (duress alarms): will be provided for staff where a risk assessment has identified that there is a relevant risk of personal harm due to the activity they are performing and there may be a need to raise an alert in cases of emergency (for example, when working alone).

Personal gas detection equipment: will be provided for staff where a risk assessment has identified that there is a risk of personal harm in a confined space due to exposure to atmospheric hazards.

3.4. Funding of PPE

PPE required in the workplace for staff and for students involved with research activities will be provided by the University with costs to be met by the relevant College, Division, Research group or work area. If staff identify a need for PPE they should discuss this with their supervisor in the first instance.

The University will also provide other Workers under its direction, as well as any other persons at risk from the University's work, with any PPE required, if such equipment is not provided to them by another person conducting a business or undertaking.

Where possible, researchers should include funding for safety equipment within their research budgets. Where these items are excluded, researchers should discuss funding for such items with their School. For competitive research applications where this is not possible, funding for these items should be included on the University's Application Coversheet.

Depending on the School and the equipment, responsibility for meeting the cost of some types of PPE for teaching activities may lie with the student (this will be identified on enrolment), unless the PPE is identified as being provided by the University. This will be at the discretion of the relevant Head of School or Pro Vice- Chancellor, after a consideration of relevant information (including an initial risk assessment).

3.5. Use of PPE

Requirement for use of PPE and protective clothing include:

- Heads of School or Business Units will provide supervision to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that appropriate PPE is being used in the manner required;
- All PPE provided for use must be suitable for the user, the nature of the work and the identified risk;
- Disposable PPE (gowns, gloves, booties) must be disposed of in-line with facility protocols and not removed from the facility;
- Single use PPE must only be worn once;
- PPE must be kept in a clean and hygienic condition for the user;
- PPE must not be shared between users unless it can be cleaned to hygienic standards e.g. face shields. Some PPE is not suitable for cleaning to hygienic standards and therefore must not be shared e.g. ear muffs. Disposable PPE must never be shared;
- Any PPE used must be stored and located in a place such that it remains clean, free from dust, dirt and chemicals and where it cannot deteriorate;
- Any storage areas used for PPE must be clearly identified; and
- Signage must be clearly displayed at entrances to facilities where PPE is mandatory.

3.6. Maintenance of PPE

The following must be implemented for maintenance of PPE:

- There must be appropriate and adequate maintenance of PPE in line with manufacturer and Australian Standards requirements to ensure it is maintained in good working condition ready for use;
- Where specific maintenance and/or testing requirements exist for an item of PPE, appropriately detailed records must be maintained in accordance with Guideline [HSG 7.1 Health and Safety Records and Document Control](#);
- Maintenance must include inspection before each use to determine if the equipment will work as intended;
- Where PPE is damaged such that it may not provide the necessary protection, it should be either repaired by a qualified repairer or disposed of appropriately and replaced; and
- Workers, students and visitors must use PPE for the purpose intended and in the manner required by the University and are required to immediately inform their supervisor or other nominated point of contact of any defects or deficiencies of which they become aware in relation to PPE provided.

3.7. PPE training and competency

University Business Units have the responsibility to ensure that workers utilising PPE are experienced, informed, trained and/or instructed in the on the correct use, wearing, maintenance, storage and limitations of PPE they will be using, so far as is reasonably practicable. Records are to be maintained locally of workers training and experience, including any applicable certificates of competency.

Competency assessment and identification and explanation of local PPE requirements is to be included in relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Facility inductions.

Operator information and instruction must comply with the requirements of Guideline [HSG 4.2 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Induction, Training and Competency](#).

People involved in maintenance and inspection of PPE should also be given training and instruction to ensure that risks are eliminated or minimised, so far as is reasonably practicable, while carrying out these activities.

4. Definitions

In the context of the Health and Safety Management System Framework:

Employer	Means the University of Newcastle (the University).
Executive Committee	Consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Chief Operating Officer, Chief People and Culture Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, the University Secretary and the President of Academic Senate.
Leader / Supervisor	Any member of the University who is responsible for supervising staff and/or undergraduate or postgraduate students and/or for leading research projects.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Anything used or worn by a person to minimise risk to their health and safety, such as safety clothing, footwear, or equipment for specified circumstances or areas.
Worker	Includes an employee, conjoint, student on work experience, contractor, sub-contractor, and volunteer. A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for the University or another person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as: (a) an employee, or (b) a contractor or subcontractor, or (c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or (d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or (e) an outworker, or (f) an apprentice or trainee, or (g) a student gaining work experience, or

	(h) a volunteer, or (i) a person of a prescribed class.
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5. Responsibilities

A comprehensive list of health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities is provided in [HSG 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities Guideline](#).

Specific responsibilities under this Guideline include:

Executive Committee

- Ensure that resources are allocated for the appropriate selection, use, maintenance and disposal of PPE;
- Monitor that processes are in place and are being used, to ensure that the health and safety of people is not put at risk.

Leaders and Supervisors

- Must comply with the requirement to use or wear appropriate clothing and PPE when this is necessary for the work activities being undertaken, in accordance with information, instruction and training provided, and so far as they are reasonably able;
- Must not intentionally misuse or damage the PPE;
- Must inform the University of any identified damage to, defect in or need to clean or decontaminate the PPE;
- Any person managing or supervising contractors is required to ensure the contractors provide their Workers with PPE that conforms to the relevant standard;
- Ensure that Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) for tasks include reference to PPE when required;
- Communicate the requirements for Workers, students and visitors to utilise PPE and follow SOPs or SWMSs when required;
- Ensure that clear and appropriate signs are positioned in locations where PPE must be worn; and
- Ensure Workers who undertake teaching communicate the requirements for, and monitor the use of, appropriate PPE by students under their supervision.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team

- Provide advice to the University community in regard to the particular requirements of PPE available to protect Workers from exposure to workplace hazards; and
- Support the University community in the selection, use, training, maintenance and disposal of PPE and protective clothing.

Workers

- Must comply with the requirement to use or wear appropriate clothing and PPE when this is necessary for the work activities being undertaken, in accordance with information, instruction and training provided, and so far as they are reasonably able;
- Must not intentionally misuse or damage the PPE;
- Must inform the University of any identified damage to, defect in or need to clean or decontaminate the PPE;
- Follow the Standard Operating Procedures and instructions provided for using and maintaining PPE;
- Attend instruction and training sessions relating to use and maintenance of PPE;
- Report any health and safety or compliance issues to the Leader / Supervisor in addition to lodging a report in the online Incident Hazard Reporting System (AIMS).

6. References & Related Documents

The following documentation is referenced in, or applicable to this Guideline:

[HSG 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[HSG 3.1 Health and Safety Risk Management](#)

[HSG 4.2 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Induction, Training and Competency](#)

[HSG 8.1 Health and Safety Inspections and Testing](#)

[KRA 1.6 Noise Management](#)

[KRA 1.7 Laboratory Safety](#)

[KRA 3.1 Working at Height](#)

[University of Newcastle Tender Procedure](#)

[University of Newcastle Procurement Policy](#)

7. Amendment History

Version	Date of Issue	Approval	Section(s) Modified	Details of Amendment
1	June 2015	Director, People and Workforce Strategy	-	Original version.
2	October 2023	CPCO	All	1. All sections reviewed for legal compliance 2. Updated content in all sections, including title of KRA to include protective clothing

				3. Added new/renamed Related Documents 4. Added Amendment History 5. Amended document control header and footer
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8. Appendices

Nil