



SITE SAFE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for Construction and Building sites

The following information provides guidance for the selection of PPE to protect workers involved in building and construction activities. It must be emphasised that PPE must only be selected once other methods to eliminate or minimise risks have been considered.

Normally PPE is used to support other methods of risk control rather than as a stand alone means of protection. For instance a dust mask would be worn when cutting cement board on site; however the primary means of control may be the use of an extractor to remove the dust.

PPE	Requirements	Recommendation
Hard Hats	These should be worn by workers whenever an overhead risk exists. Generally this is once the structure has risen above head height or any crane lifting operations overhead. It will also include workers in excavations and could include work around plant and machinery.	Make this mandatory PPE for workers on site. This will ensure they are being worn when required and bring them in line with industry safety standards. It can help protect workers from UV exposure and also contributes to a professional image on the project.
Eye & Face Protection	All workers should have safety glasses available and be worn when there are potential eye injuries. This would include but not limited to: use of power tools; use of chemicals; some environmental conditions such as high wind. Additionally some activities such as using an angle grinder will require goggles or safety glasses (with side shield) for eye protection and a faceshield for face protection.	Make this mandatory for use on specific activities based on risk identified. Monitor compliance with regular site inspections.
Hearing Protection	All workers should have ear muffs or plugs available and be worn where there is potential for noise induced hearing loss. This would include but not limited to: use of power tools; use of nail guns; work near plant and machinery.	Make this mandatory for use on specific activities based on risks identified. Monitor compliance with regular site inspections.
Respiratory Protection	Some workers should have masks or respirators available and be worn where there is potential exposure to respiratory damage. This would include but not limited to: use of some power tools; use of chemicals; welding and grinding; any activity that creates dust or fumes. Level of protection will vary. For instance a carpenter using a bench saw will be adequately protected by a mask rated to filter out dust and particulates; a welder will need a respirator rated to filter out fumes. When working with high hazard chemicals, personal protective equipment must be tested to make sure it is fit for purpose.	Make this mandatory for use by specific tradesmen based on hazards identified. Monitor compliance with regular site inspections. There is a duty on suppliers to provide guidance to employers and employees on suitability of the respirators and cartridges.
Hi Viz Vest	These should be worn by workers whenever working around plant and machinery or where traffic risks exist.	Make this mandatory PPE for workers on site. This will ensure they are being worn when required and bring them in line with

PPE	Requirements	Recommendation
		industry safety standards. It also contributes to a professional image on the project.
Protective Clothing	Some workers should have these available and be worn when there is potential exposure to specific risks. Examples of this may include but not limited to: overalls for painters and decorators; waterproof leggings for concrete workers. In some locations consideration may be required for clothing to protect from extremes of temperature.	Make this mandatory for use by specific tradesmen based on risks identified. Monitor compliance with regular site inspections.
Gloves	These should be worn by workers whenever there is a risk of a hand injury. Generally most construction and building activities some risk or hand injury. It is essential the the appropriate glove is provided for the task being performed.	Make this mandatory for use on specific activities based on risks identified. Monitor compliance with regular site inspections.
Safety Footwear	These should be worn by workers whenever there is a potential foot injury. Generally all construction and building sites carry this potential risk.	Make this mandatory PPE for workers on site. This will ensure they are being worn when required and bring them in line with industry safety standards.

The above recommendations for setting mandatory PPE requirements fall into one of three general categories:

- Mandatory for site
- Mandatory for activity
- Mandatory for trade

Site requirements will be determined by the main contractor or project management based on known site risks. Activity and trade requirements will be determined by the main contractor or project management based on known activity or trade risks; generally supported by information supplied by the workers.

For more information on specific items of PPE visit www.sitesafe.org.nz for a selection of Toolbox talks and factsheets.