



National  
Operational  
Guidance

## Control measure

### Personal protective equipment



**NFCC**  
Fire Central  
Programme Office

Developed and maintained by the NFCC

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### Control measure knowledge

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is used to protect personnel against health or safety risks. It includes items such as:

- Helmets
- Gloves
- Eye protection
- High-visibility clothing
- Safety footwear

Equipment such as chemical protective clothing (CPC), respiratory protective equipment (RPE) and safety harnesses are also types of PPE and are covered in more detail elsewhere in guidance. PPE should be regarded as a last resort if risks to health and safety cannot be adequately controlled in other ways. To avoid unsuitable selection, fire and rescue service risk assessments should define the specific PPE required for an activity.

If more than one item of PPE is to be worn, they must be compatible with each other and adequately control the risks when used together. PPE must be maintained in good working order and properly stored when not in use. Personnel should use PPE in accordance with the training they have received and report any loss, damage or faults.

During protracted incidents, or when making up equipment, personnel may be inclined to relax PPE; incident commanders should be vigilant and base any decision to downgrade the need for PPE on an assessment of residual risk.

If PPE has become dirty, contaminated or damaged it may not perform to the standard required by the appropriate specification. PPE should only be worn if it has been subject to appropriate cleaning, decontamination and testing processes.

For legislative requirements, refer to:

- [Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

For further information on respiratory protective equipment refer to [Respiratory Protective](#)



## [Equipment.](#)

### **Strategic actions**

Fire and rescue services must:

- Provide employees with suitable personal protective equipment that fits the wearer correctly and adequately controls identified risks
- Ensure that personal protective equipment and respiratory protective equipment worn simultaneously is compatible and does not negatively impact other safety measures
- Provide appropriate accommodation (storage) for PPE when it is not being used

Fire and rescue services should:

- Specify the level of PPE for hazards identified through risk assessment and communicate to personnel
- Have suitable arrangements for the cleaning and maintenance of PPE in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- Ensure that there are suitable arrangements to support the replenishment of PPE

### **Tactical actions**

Incident commanders should:

- Ensure that personnel have access to the appropriate PPE
- Ensure the appropriate PPE is maintained throughout the incident based on an assessment of risk
- Check the condition and serviceability of PPE when assessing operational readiness for redeployment



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Identify when dirt, contamination or damage may affect the performance of PPE