Arbeitsinspektion

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Identifying and assessing risks,assessing and selecting PPE

IMPORTANT

Employers are obliged to make available personal protective equipment (PPE) at risk site at their expense if it is not possible to prevent or sufficiently limit the risks by other protection measures (technical or organisational).

Risk assessment of workplaces

Risk assessment of workplace have to take into account the following circumstances:

- the type and scope of the risks requiring the use of personal protective equipment (types of PPE, Chapter 2 PSA-V)
- the conditions of PPE use and surrounding conditions for the work to be performed
- the workers' physical constitution required for using personal protective equipment

Assessing PPE

The final selection of PPE is made after the assessment has been completed successfully.

1. period of use of the equipment
2. frequency and period of exposure to risks
3. scope and type of risks
4. specific characteristics of the workplace, processes and the type of activity
5. wearing comfort and performance characteristics of the personal protection equipment

Selecting PPE

The final selection of PPE is made after the assessment has been completed successfully

- PPE is suitable according to the assessment results.
- The extent to which wearers are impaired or strained or hindered in their work is as small as possible.
- PPE complies with the laws applicable for marketers (in particular PSA-SV).
- Applicable limit values (concerning noise levels endangering hearing, for example) are reliably complied with.
- Wearers were given the opportunity to try on PPE to increase their acceptance.

Informing employees of

- the risks against which PPE provides protection
- the results of the evaluation of the workplace
- adopted measures
- the results of the PPE assessment
- the risks if PPE is not used
- hazards for safety and health caused by any persisting residual risks

Instructing workers concerning

- the intended use of PPE
- the correct storage of PPE before first use
- the correct storage of PPE between uses
- reserved storage areas
- cleaning and maintenance of PPE
- proper disposal of PPE (of contaminated gloves, for example)
- how to recognise damage and defects, and measures to be taken in case of damage/defects
- other measures to be taken when using PPE.

When informing and instructing workers, specifications provided by the manufacturer (information for users) have to be taken into account.
Workers have to be informed and instructed before using PPE for the first time and at regular intervals later on (usually every year). For the use of certain PPE (such as PPE against falling, isolating respiratory protective equipment), special training and practice are required.

Most common hazards and required PPE

FOOT AND LEG PROTECTION

- Crushing or clamping
- Clamp
- Items which topple over, fall down or roll
- Stepping or kneeling on pointed or sharp items
- Contact with hot or cold surfaces or media
- Chemical hazards
- Bacteria, viruses or other microorganisms
- Ionising radiation
- Optical radiation
- Electrical hazards
- Working in a kneeling position over longer periods of time
- Weather, heat, cold, dampness, moisture

HEAD PROTECTION

- Falling items
- Hitting or bumping into items
- Items which swing, topple over or fly off
- Being caught by moving or rotating parts of work equipment or other items
- Contact with hot or cold surfaces or media
- Optical radiation
- Electrical hazards
- Weather, heat, cold, dampness
- Ionising radiation

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

- Stabs, cuts, being rubbed sore, dust
- Being caught by moving or rotating parts
- Edges, saws or other pointed or sharp items
- Electrical hazards, including electric voltage and electrostatic charge
- Contact with hot or cold surfaces or media, flames, sparks or splashes of hot liquids
- Chemical hazards caused by solid, liquid or gaseous substances, particularly when getting into contact with substances which may cause skin damage or permeate through the skin
- Bacteria, viruses or other microorganisms
- Severe contamination
- Ionising radiation
- Optical radiation
- Bites and other injuries, particularly caused by animals
- Weather, heat, cold, dampness, moisture or
- hazards associated with working in public traffic areas and company-internal traffic

EYE PROTECTION, FACE PROTECTION

- Foreign bodies and solid bodies, including dusts, chippings, splinters or grains
- Optical radiation, being blinded by light
- Chemical hazards caused by solid, liquid or gaseous substances
- Thermal hazards caused by solid bodies or liquids (hot or cold to the touch), gases (convective heat), infrared radiation, flames
- Bacteria, viruses or other microorganisms
- Electrical hazards, including electric arcs, photokeratitis
- Ionising radiation

EAR PROTECTION

- Noise levels endangering hearing

FALLING	
	• Risk of falling • Risk of sinking in or • Risk of drowning

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION.	
	• When at risk of breathing in hazardous substances (occupational exposure limits (MAK and TRK levels) • When oxygen content is too low (below 15 vol%).

HAND PROTECTION	
	• Cutting, sawing • Hitting or bumping into items • Crushing or clamping; items which topple over, fall down or roll • Impacts • Touching pointed or sharp items • Abrasive items • Chemical hazards caused by solid, liquid or gaseous substances, particularly by substances which may cause skin damage or may permeate through the skin • thermal hazards caused by solid bodies or liquids (hot or cold to the touch), gases (convective heat) • Bacteria, viruses or other microorganisms • Electrical hazards, including electric current, electric arcs • Vibration • Ionising radiation • Optical radiation • Severe contamination • Wheather, heat, cold, dampness, moisture

SKIN PROTECTION	
	• Skin protection products (skin protection, skin cleansing, skin care) • Skin protection scheme

Legal framework

Sections 69 and 70, Health and Safety at Work Act ArbeitnehmerInnenschutzgesetz, ASchG

The competent Labour Inspectorate will be happy to advise you

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