



ACT PUBLIC SERVICE

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

1. PURPOSE

This document sets out the ACT Government policy for the supply, maintenance and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in ACT Public Service (ACTPS) workplaces.

2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Directorates and any person considered a worker for the ACT Government under the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act).

3. CONTEXT

The ACT Government has responsibilities under the WHS Act to provide safe and healthy working environments for its workers, clients and visitors through practices that foster effective safety management practices in its workplaces.

In accordance with the WHS Act, Directorates are required to provide and maintain healthy and safe workplaces on behalf of the Territory by eliminating risks to health and safety so far as is reasonably practicable,¹ and to minimise those risks that cannot be eliminated.

Clause 36 of the *Work Health Safety Regulation 2011*² requires a hierarchy of control be used to manage risk. This defines the use of PPE as the final control mechanism to be used only after all other control options have been exhausted. It may be used where elimination of a risk to health and safety is not reasonably practicable. PPE protects a worker's body from hazards and includes a range of safety and clothing equipment such as boots, face masks, hard hats, hearing protection, gloves etc.

¹ WHS Regulation 2011 policy on the meaning of *reasonably practicable*

² WHS Regulation 2011

³ Clause 36

3.1 Work Health and Safety Management System

Directorates must be aware of and comply with the following ACT Government policies in conjunction with this policy:

- Work Health and Safety Risk Management;
- Dangerous Substances;
- Fire Safety and Emergency Planning; and
- Managing Injury and Illness in the Workplace.

4. LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

As an employer, the Territory has a range of duties with respect to management of workplace health and safety risks in accordance with the WHS Act and its associated Regulations.

Similarly, the WHS Act acknowledges the obligation on workers to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, to cooperate and comply with reasonable instructions, policies or procedures, and to ensure that their actions do not adversely impact the health and safety of other persons.

Under the WHS Regulations Directorates must implement risk control measures, including through the provision and use of PPE by their workers, where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate identified risks to health and safety.³

5. DIRECTION STATEMENT

Directorates are required to develop and implement a comprehensive work health and safety (WHS) risk management system in accordance with the ACTPS Work Health and Safety Risk Management Policy.

This includes the reasons to provide, and ensure the use of, PPE as a control method where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate identified risks to health and safety. At a minimum, Directorates must select and supply PPE which complies with the relevant Australian Standards or equivalent.⁴

The ACT Government recognises that PPE is the least effective method for controlling risks to health and safety and should only be used until more effective control methods are put in place or where other control methods are not suitable or available.⁵

³ Clause 36

⁴ See part 10 of this policy for a list of Australian Standards related to PPE, further information on standards can be obtained from Standards Australia at <http://www.standards.org.au/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵ WorkSafe ACT PPE Guidance Note, November 2010

5.1 Policy Principles

The guiding principles that underpin this policy, and to which Directorates must have regard, are that:

- items of PPE which are lost or irreparably damaged should be replaced as soon as practicable, with work requiring the use of the PPE ceasing until the item has been repaired or replaced;
- no employee should be charged for any item of PPE;
- in all cases, PPE cleaning processes should protect employees and third parties from exposure to hazardous substances or products. Where parties are at risk of exposure, Directorates must make arrangements (via an appropriate risk assessment) for contaminated PPE to be cleaned in a safe manner away from the domestic environment;
- PPE purchased by the Directorate remains the property of the Directorate. If any PPE accessory is in a suitable condition the Directorate should seek to clean it and provide to new/other workers. Uniform items should be retained by the Directorate;
- workers may seek to retain PPE on leaving the ACTPS, with Directorates' having responsibility to consider the condition of the PPE (wear and tear), replacement cost factors, the type of equipment or clothing and whether it can be readily sanitised and reissued;
- replacement of PPE must be made on a fair wear and tear basis, with replacement required when the protective value of the PPE has been lost or degraded below an acceptable level.

5.2 Personal Protective Equipment Plan⁶

A (PPEP) should be developed in situations where a risk assessment has identified that PPE is to be used as a control measure. The PPEP should identify and record:

- the basis for selecting each type of equipment used in the workplace;
- reasons for selecting each type of PPE;
- necessary medical data, such as the results of individual hearing tests undertaken prior to, and periodically during, exposure to noise;
- where necessary, worker training needs;
- where relevant, exclusive use of PPE by workers and fitting requirements for individual items;
- procedures for safe laundering/sanitisation of contaminated PPE and a safe process for workers to be decontaminated;
- storage requirements of the equipment;

⁶ <http://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/publication/view/1221>

- maintenance and/or replacement requirements;
- initial assessment to ensure that the equipment meets specifications when procured; and
- periodic assessments to ensure that the equipment is used properly and is effective.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Directors-General

Directors-General must exercise due diligence to ensure work environments are safe and healthy for workers, clients and visitors, and that Directorates comply with this and other relevant ACT Government policy on work health and safety.

In connection with PPE, Directors-General are responsible for:

- a) understanding work health and safety matters and any hazards and risks associated with the Directorate's operation;
- b) ensuring risk management processes and a PPEP are developed and integrated as a component of a Directorate's safety management systems;
- c) ensuring resources are made available to purchase and maintain appropriate PPE, and where appropriate induction training;
- d) ensuring Executive, managers and supervisors are trained and aware of their responsibilities in the selection, provision and use of PPE in the workplace;
- e) ensuring workers and HSRs are consulted in accordance with ACTPS policy; and
- f) ensuring appropriate processes are in place to receive and consider information and respond to workplace incidents, hazards and risks.

6.2 Executive, Manager and Supervisors

Executives, managers and supervisors have responsibility for assisting Directors-General in the implementation of this policy by ensuring:

- a) understanding of workplace health and safety matters and awareness of potential hazards and risks in their workplaces, including risks associated with the use of PPE;
- b) resourcing the development, implementation, and maintenance of the WHS management system and the PPEP;
- c) all practicable risk elimination/control measures are implemented before the issue of PPE is contemplated and that PPE selection is made after adequate assessment of suitability to the work process and by application of recognised and accepted standards;
- d) workers and HSRs are consulted in relation to the PPEP and selection of equipment in accordance with the ACTPS policy on consultation;

- e) a system is in place covering all aspects of PPE including education, training, use, acquisition, maintenance, contamination, cleaning, storage, periodic review, and replacement;
- f) instruction, induction, training, and supervision for all workers using PPE (including informing the person using PPE of its limitations), and maintenance of accurate records that identify trained workers as well as workers in need of training/retraining;
- g) manufacturer's instructions on the use of PPE are easily accessible to workers and HSRs, and that workers use PPE in compliance with those instructions;
- h) workers are aware of, understand, and comply with their responsibilities with due diligence under this policy, and
- i) clear signage is posted to identify areas where PPE must be used in the workplace.

Executives and managers are also responsible for ensuring that records in relation to PPE are maintained, archived, and disposed of in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002* (including its subordinate laws and associated instruments) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

6.3 Workers

ACT Government workers have a responsibility to ensure that they:

- a) comply with the use of PPE in accordance with any information, training or reasonable instruction so far as reasonably able, and to not intentionally misuse or damage the equipment;
- b) inform a manager if the PPE is uncomfortable or does not fit properly, or if they become aware of any damage to, defect in, or a need to clean or decontaminate any PPE; and
- c) immediately stop work and inform a manager, if any PPE fails while being used.

7. GLOSSARY

“Hazard” means a situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person. Hazards at work may include: noisy machinery, a moving forklift, chemicals, electricity, working at heights, a repetitive job, bullying and violence at the workplace.

“Personal Protective Equipment” (PPE) refers to the equipment worn by workers to reduce their exposure to hazards.

“Reasonably practicable” means that which is reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:

- the likelihood of the hazard or the risk occurring and the degree of harm that might result from it;
- what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or the risk, and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk;

- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk, and the cost associated with available ways to do this, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

“**Risk**” is the possibility that harm (death, injury or illness) might occur when exposed to a hazard.

“**Risk control**” means taking action to eliminate health and safety risks so far as is reasonably practicable, and if that is not possible, minimising the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. Eliminating a hazard will also eliminate any risks associated with that hazard.

“**Worker**” refers to:

- public employees of the ACTPS (as defined in the PSM Act);
- contractors or sub-contractors;
- an employee of a contractor or subcontractor;
- an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the business;
- an outworker;
- an apprentice or trainee;
- undertaking student gaining work experience;
- volunteers; and
- person of a prescribed class for the purposes of the WHS Act.

“**Workplace**” means ‘a place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work.

“**Work Group**” means the group of all of the employer’s workers, and a group which is established under subdivision 5.3.2 of the WHS Act.

8. REFERENCE

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

- <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-35/current/pdf/2011-35>

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

- www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2011-36/current/pdf/2011-36

Work Health and Safety Codes of Practice

- <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-35/ni.asp>

AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS⁷

AS 1269 Set: Occupational noise management set

AS 1270: Acoustics - hearing devices

AS 1336: Recommended practices for occupational eye protection

AS 1337: Personal eye protection and Eye and face protectors

AS 1698: Protective helmets for vehicle users

AS 1716: Respiratory protective devices

AS 1800: Occupational protective helmets – selection, care and use

AS 1801: Occupational protective helmets

AS 1891: Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices

AS 2161 Set: Occupational protective gloves set

AS 2210: Safety, protective and occupational footwear

AS 2225: Insulating gloves for electrical purposes

AS 4024 Series Compilation: Safety of machinery

AS 4399: Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification

AS 4453.3: Protective clothing for users of hand-held chainsaws - Protective leg wear

AS 4501 Set: Occupational protective clothing Set

AS 4824: Protective clothing for fire fighters - Requirements and test methods for protective clothing used for wild land fire fighting (ISO 15384:2003, MOD)

AS 4967: Protective clothing for fire fighters - Requirements and test methods for protective clothing used for structural fire fighting

AS ISO 2801: Clothing for protection against heat and flame - General recommendations for selection, care and use of protective clothing

AS ISO 6529: Protective clothing - Protection against chemicals - Determination of resistance of protective clothing materials to permeation by liquids and gases

AS ISO 13994: Clothing for protection against chemicals - Determination of the resistance of protective clothing materials to penetration by liquids under pressure

AS ISO 22608: Protective clothing - Protection against liquid chemicals - Measurement of repellency, retention, and penetration of liquid pesticide formulations through protective clothing materials

AS ISO/IEC 18000: Information technology

9. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed after three (3) years unless there is a requirement for earlier review.

⁷ This list is not exhaustive – Directorates should refer to Standards Australia for further information



ACT

Government

Chief Minister and Treasury

10. APPROVAL AUTHORITY

This policy is approved by Andrew Kefford, Commissioner for Public Administration, 26 July 2013.

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