



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Procedure

1. Guiding Principles

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) is committed to providing and maintaining a safe work environment.

This procedure is to inform all staff, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors and visitors that work or visit WACHS sites of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements they need to adhere to when entering WACHS sites or performing their duties. This document supports the Environmental Cleaning Policy, Infection Prevention and Control Policy and Managing Hazardous Chemicals Procedure.

2. Scope

This procedure defines the minimum requirements at all WACHS sites together with the selection, use, care, maintenance and storage of equipment and clothing designed to provide protection to the wearer. Each work area is to assess the need for PPE, which must be provided and used where an actual or potential risk exposure has been identified. It applies to all workers and visitors as detailed above.

PPE used across WACHS sites is to comply with the appropriate AS/NZ Standards.

3. Definitions

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) means all equipment which is intended to be worn or held by a person to protect them from risk to health and safety while at work.
Hazard	A situation or item that has the potential to harm people, property or the environment. For hazardous chemicals and dangerous goods, this covers physicochemical, health and environmental hazards.
Risk	The likelihood and consequence of an injury or harm occurring.
Incident	An event that during the course of undertaking work related duties resulted in, or could have resulted in injury or disease. This includes near miss incidents.
Care	To keep in good working order, includes processes for cleaning, decontamination and storage.
Maintenance	To preserve from loss or deterioration, include processes for inspection, repair and removal from service.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and not adversely affecting the health and safety of other persons
- ensuring relevant PPE is accessible or obtained before commencing individual tasks
- inspecting PPE prior to use and informing their supervisor if PPE is damaged, defective, or expired and replace accordingly
- complying with any reasonable instruction and cooperating with any policy or procedure relating to the use, handling and storage of PPE in the workplace
- wearing the required PPE at all times when required and as instructed
- ensuring they attend and complete relevant PPE training when instructed
- reporting all hazards, incidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences and system failures in a timely manner which occur or have the potential to occur using the WACHS Safety Risk Report Form (SRRF)
- using all safety equipment provided by WACHS that is relevant to the task.

4.2 Contractors

Contractors are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and not adversely affecting the health and safety of other persons
- inspecting PPE prior to use and informing their site contact if PPE is damaged, defective, or expired
- complying with any reasonable instruction and cooperating with any policy or procedure relating to the use, handling and storage of PPE in the workplace
- wearing the required PPE at all times when required and as instructed
- reporting all hazards, incidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences and system failures in a timely manner which occur or have the potential to occur to their site contact
- using all safety equipment provided by WACHS that is relevant to the task.

4.3 Supervisors and Managers

Supervisors and managers are responsible for:

- ensuring that PPE is used, stored and maintained, in accordance with applicable requirements
- ensuring that all reasonable practicable engineering solutions are implemented within their areas in relation to plant and systems of work to minimise the necessity for PPE
- ensuring PPE is made available for use by all staff, contractors and visitors

- ordering required PPE identified by safety data sheets (SDS) or risk assessments
- ensuring their staff and contractors comply with PPE requirements
- identifying all high risk work areas that require staff, contractors and visitors to wear PPE and provide appropriate signage
- notifying staff and providing appropriate time allocation to complete PPE training
- keeping records of the information and training provided.

4.4 Regional OSH Coordinator

The Regional OSH Coordinator is responsible for providing advice:

- to managers and supervisors on PPE requirements in the workplace
- on risk assessments and the requirement of PPE use for hazardous tasks
- and consulting with managers and staff on how to remediate hazards and risks that have been identified and raised via WACHS SRRF reporting.

5. Procedure

General Requirements

PPE is any protective device or clothing worn by a worker to reduce or control the level of risk when exposed to:

- dangerous goods, hazardous chemicals, infectious substances
- dust, fumes or particles
- radiation
- noise
- moving objects e.g. vehicles, trolleys and forklifts
- flying objects when using machinery with moving parts
- environmental factors e.g. temperature.

5.1 Signage

- PPE mandatory signs are to be displayed in all areas throughout WACHS sites that requires PPE to be worn. It is the responsibility of all persons to observe and comply with the appropriate PPE requirements in the area.
- It is the responsibility of department managers to ensure PPE signage in their area is maintained in a good and clean condition.

5.2 Maintenance

All PPE is to be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' maintenance instructions. Maintenance arrangements are to include:

- regular inspections to ensure that the protection intended is provided. An inspection program is to include a schedule, elements to be inspected and decisions and actions based on the results

- repairs and alterations – defining what kind of repairs are acceptable and who is responsible for the repairs
- disposal – ensuring PPE that is no longer fit for purpose does not re-enter service and is disposed of taking into consideration environmental factors and the health and safety of anyone coming into contact with the (contaminated) clothing / equipment.

5.3 Care

All PPE is to be cared for in accordance with the manufacturers' care instructions.

Care arrangements are to include:

- good cleaning practices
- decontamination instructions when hazardous substances are present
- storage to ensure PPE remains hygienic, clean and protected until it is required for use

Ripped or frayed clothing is a hazard and must be exchanged or disposed of as soon as practicable.

5.4 Selection and Use

5.4.1 Selection

Risk assessments must be completed for all tasks. When selecting PPE the following is to be considered:

- Assessment of risks identified with the task, which may include the task risk level, the frequency of exposure to the risk; and workstation characteristics involved in the task.
- Defining the level of protection required for the task.
- Trialling the compatibility and practicality of the PPE.
- Assessing PPE information such as recommendations from manufacturers regarding replacement requirements, quality assurance, inspection, and maintenance requirements.
- Considering logistical requirements.

5.4.2 Use

Use requirements will vary depending on the task risk assessment. Instructions for PPE use will be supplied by the PPE manufacturer. Worker inductions are to include training on correct PPE use, storage, maintenance and replacement.

5.5 Types of PPE

5.5.1 Head Protection

Head protection includes safety helmets, sun hats, and wet weather hats. Safety helmets should be worn where a person may be struck on the head with a falling object, or may strike their head on a fixed object. Helmet accessories such as neck flaps, ear muffs, or helmet linings may be considered and approved by Managers only if the accessory / attachment does not reduce the safety characteristics of the head protection or adversely affect the balance and comfort of the helmet.

5.5.2 Hair

All persons in high risk areas or working around rotating equipment are to ensure that hair longer than shoulder length is concealed or tied back above the top of the shoulder line to prevent entanglement and infection control risk.

5.5.3 Eye Protection

Eye protection is to be worn for tasks where there is potential for eye damage or injuries to occur. The following are to be considered regarding protective eyewear in the workplace:

- Nature of the risk to eyes e.g. radiation, dust, abrasive particles, biological hazards, chemical hazards.
- Visual requirements of the task.
- Personal preference/comfort of the wearer e.g. weight, ventilation and unrestricted vision.

There are many types of eye wear that can be considered e.g. goggles, face shield, glasses, and welding helmets. Please refer to specific policies, standards (AS/NZS 1336 Recommended Practices for Occupational Eye Protection), job hazard analysis / safe work method statements and managers with any queries regarding the type of eye wear that should be chosen. It should be noted that prescription spectacles are not adequate forms of eye protection PPE.

5.5.4 Hearing Protection

Any person who is exposed to a noise level of 85dB over an eight hour shift must wear hearing protection. Guidance is available in AS/NZS1269 Occupational Noise Management, and AS/NZS 1270 Acoustics - hearing protectors. Some of the commonly used devices include disposable ear plugs and ear muffs.

There are varying types of hearing protection devices that may accommodate acceptability of the wearer, compatibility with other PPE, weight and requirement for the device to attenuate noise to a level not greater than 85dB.

5.5.5 Respiratory Protection

WACHS is to ensure that no person in the workplace is exposed to atmospheric contaminant at concentrations in excess of the exposure standards or the unbreathable atmosphere as outlined in Division 3 of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996. Where it is not possible to remove contaminants, WACHS is to provide suitable respiratory PPE in accordance with Section 6 of AS/NZS 1715. Guidance is available in AS/NZS 1715 Selection, Use and Maintenance of Respiratory Protective Devices and AS/NZS 1716 Respiratory Protective Devices.

5.5.6 Hand Protection

There is a vast range of hand protection available to protect from various hand injuries depending on the hazard e.g. chemical, burn, laceration etc. To ensure the correct type of protection is used, refer to Job Hazards Analysis sheets or Safe Work Method Statements, WACHS [Environmental Cleaning Policy](#) and the Australian Standards. Selection and use will depend on the type of hazard that exists e.g. chemical, biological, and thermal. Some people may develop an allergic reaction to latex gloves, if this occurs reduced protein and powder free gloves can be provided by WACHS. Workers are to ensure hands are washed thoroughly after PPE use.

5.5.7 Foot Protection

Protective footwear should provide both adequate protection from injury and comfortable support to the feet. Footwear PPE is varied and classified by the types of duties performed. All risks associated with the role are to be assessed according to the task, environment and nature of the work to determine the specific requirements. Footwear falls under the guidelines provided by the AS/NZ Standard 2210.1 Occupational protective footwear.

5.5.8 Skin Protection

Employees who are required to work outdoors are to consider the environment they are exposed to during their work shift and hazards that could potentially cause harm. Information pertaining to selection of skin protection PPE can be found below:

- Sunscreen - AS/NZS 26014 and AS 1067
- Clothing - AS/NZS 4399
- Eye protection - AS/NZS 1337 and AS/NZS 1338.

5.5.9 Other

This may include PPE for specific tasks such as working with chemicals, radiation, cytotoxic materials, welding, painting e.g. lead aprons for X-Ray protection, sleeve protectors, aprons, coveralls when using chemicals, or leather jackets or cold protective clothing for work near furnaces or cool rooms. Task risk assessments will determine the type of PPE that is required. For further advice please seek guidance from specific policies, line managers or regional OSH departments.

5.6 Storage

PPE is to be stored in readily accessible locations where it can't be damaged, deteriorate or be used by another person if it is unhygienic to do so. Storage methods and locations are also to conform to manufacturers' storage guidelines.

5.7 Disposal

Single use PPE items such as gloves, aprons and masks are to be disposed of after each procedure or activity to prevent cross transmission or micro-organisms. The prompt removal of PPE between tasks is to be done before leaving the area. PPE is not to replace other infection control practices such as hand hygiene.

5.8 Purchasing

It is the responsibility of WACHS to provide PPE to their workers. The brand and type of PPE to be used is to be determined by WACHS in accordance to procurement arrangements, however in consultation with line managers there may be times where workers purchase PPE that is different or more expensive than what has been offered by WACHS (e.g. the PPE offered by WACHS legitimately does not fit or suit the worker). All PPE purchased by workers needs to meet the minimum requirements specified in WACHS policy and Australian standards.

5.9 Training and Supervision

Before commencing work, staff who are likely to be exposed to a hazardous health or safety risk are to receive information, instruction and training on:

- risks in the workplace
- use and location of PPE
 - PPE to be used
 - storage, care, maintenance and disposal of PPE procedures to be followed
 - Reporting procedures on hazards/risks that have been identified and raised.

5.10 Records

Training records that demonstrate PPE instruction are to be maintained by the Manager.

6. Compliance

It is a requirement of the WA Health Code of Conduct that employees “take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and that of others in the workplaces”. Failure to comply may constitute a suspected breach of discipline and may result in an improvement or disciplinary action in accordance with the WA Health Discipline Policy.

7. Evaluation

In accordance with the [Occupational Safety and Health Policy](#), WACHS is committed to continual improvement through monitoring and evaluation strategies. Implementation of this procedure will be monitored through key OSH measures including:

- internal audits or examinations to determine:
 - that PPE is readily accessible and visible to staff, contractors and visitors
 - areas where mandatory use of PPE is required are signposted accordingly
 - individual characteristics or conditions of workers are taken into account when requiring use of PPE (e.g. non latex gloves supplied to staff who have allergies to latex)
 - safe work procedures include required PPE for task and any relevant information relating to PPE inspection, use, cleaning, maintenance, storage and disposal
 - documentation relating to inspection, use, cleaning, maintenance and disposal of PPE is retained for requisite time periods.
- Reviews of induction and training programs to ensure inclusion of PPE information regarding inspection, use, cleaning, maintenance, storage and disposal requirements
- Monitoring the use and effectiveness of PPE
- Monitoring incident reports (WACHS SRRF) and workers' compensation claim data.

8. Standards

- [EQuIPNational Standards](#) – Standard 15: Corporate Systems and Safety - 15.12.1, 15.13.3
- Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals and Dangerous Goods Procedure
- AS/NZS 2161.1 Occupational protective gloves - Part 1: Selection, use and maintenance.
- AS/NZS 2161.2 Occupational protective gloves - Part 2: General requirements
- AS/NZS 2161.3 Occupational protective gloves - Part 3: Protection against mechanical risks
- AS/NZS 2161.4 Occupational protective gloves - Part 4: Protection against thermal risks (heat and fire)
- AS/NZS 2161.5 Occupational protective gloves - Part 5: Protection against cold
- AS/NZS 2161.7.1 Occupational protective gloves - Part 7.1: Protection against cuts and stabs by hand knives – chainmail gloves and arm guards
- AS/NZ Standard 2210.1 Occupational protective footwear
- AS/NZS 1715 Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective devices
- AS/NZS 1716 Respiratory protective devices
- Sunscreen - AS/NZS 26014 and AS 1067
- Clothing - AS/NZS 4399
- Eye protection - AS/NZS 1337 and AS/NZS 1338.

9. References

[Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#) (and [Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 1996](#))

10. Related Forms

WACHS [Safety Risk Report Form](#)

11. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Infection Prevention and Control Policy](#)

WACHS [Environmental Cleaning Policy](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

Contact:	WACHS Work Health and Safety Manager (K.McClean)		
Directorate:	Workforce	TRIM Record #	ED-CO-17-18844
Version:	1.00	Date Published:	11 April 2017

Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.