TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-PPE · Personal Protective Equipment Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: All workers · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 8 November 2026

For every worker who wears PPE: where it sits in the hierarchy of control, and how to choose, fit, wear, look after and replace it so it actually protects.

Personal protective equipment is the last line of defence, used when other controls cannot remove or reduce the risk enough, or alongside them. It only works if it is the right equipment, fits, is worn correctly the whole time, and is in good condition.

This talk covers PPE in the hierarchy of control, the duties of the business to provide it and of workers to use it, selection and fit (including fit testing for tight-fitting respirators), wearing, cleaning, storing and replacing it, and reporting problems.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain where PPE sits in the hierarchy of control, and why it is relied on only when higher controls are not enough
- Describe the business's duty to provide PPE, and the worker's duty to use it as instructed and look after it
- Select PPE suited to the hazard and the task, and check it fits
- Explain fit testing for tight-fitting respirators, and why the seal needs a clean-shaven face
- Inspect, clean, store and replace PPE, and report damaged or uncomfortable equipment
- Recognise the limits of PPE and the hazards it does not protect against

What it covers

Module	Covers
PPE and the hierarchy	The last line of defence; Duties of the business and workers; When PPE is required
Choosing and fitting	Matching PPE to the hazard; Fit and comfort; Respirator fit testing
Using and caring for it	Wearing it the whole time; Inspecting, cleaning and storing; Replacing and reporting

Activities

- Right PPE: workers choose PPE for four tasks and say what each item protects against, and what it does not
- PPE check: workers inspect their own PPE using the handout checklist

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What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

Questions

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

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TOOLBOX TALK

Personal Protective Equipment Awareness

Where PPE sits in the hierarchy of control, and how to choose, fit, wear and look after it

20–30 minutes · All workers

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

PPE

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ PPE in the hierarchy of control
- ✓ Duties of the business and workers
- ✓ Choosing and fitting PPE, and fit testing
- ✓ Wearing, caring for and replacing it

This talk is not

- ✕ Harness or fall protection training
- ✕ A respirator fit test, or breathing apparatus training
- ✕ PPE for licensed work, such as asbestos removal
- ✕ Our requirements: **[Our PPE requirements]**

Awareness only. Harnesses, breathing apparatus and licensed work need their own training. Fit tests are done by a competent fit tester.

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PPE in the hierarchy of control

1. **Elimination** Remove the hazard completely
2. **Substitution** Replace the hazard with something less harmful
3. **Isolation** Separate people from the hazard
4. **Engineering** Change the equipment or process to reduce the risk
5. **Administrative** Change the way work is organised
6. **PPE** Protect the person; the hazard is still there

HIGHER ORDER

Higher order controls remove or control the hazard at the source, or put a barrier between people and the hazard.

LOWER ORDER

Lower order controls rely on people to do a thing or wear a thing, every time, tired, distracted or rushed.

Behaviours are not on the hierarchy, but behaviours and culture decide whether every control on it actually works.

PPE is the last line of defence: the hazard is still there.

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Why PPE is the last line

- It relies on the right item, fitted, worn the whole time, in good condition
- It protects only the person wearing it, not the people nearby
- When it fails, it often fails without warning
- It can add hazards: heat, poorer vision or hearing, gloves caught in machinery

When PPE is required

- When higher controls cannot reduce the risk enough
- As an interim measure while better controls are put in
- On top of other controls, where the SDS, SWMS or signs say
- Where your site's PPE requirements say

Ask first: could a higher control do the job?

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Duties under WHS or OHS laws

The business must

- Provide the PPE needed, at no cost to workers
- Make sure it suits the hazard and the task, fits and is reasonably comfortable
- Maintain, repair, replace and keep it clean
- Train workers to use it, and consult them on choosing it

You must

- Use and wear PPE as you have been instructed and trained
- Not misuse or damage it on purpose
- Look after it: inspect, clean and store it
- Report PPE that is damaged, defective, needs cleaning or does not fit

Victoria's OHS laws set similar duties in their own terms. Check yours.

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TOOLBOX TALK · HAZ-PPE

Personal Protective Equipment Awareness

Participant handout · keep this

PPE is the last line of defence. It only works if it is the right equipment, fits, is worn correctly the whole time, and is in good condition. Keep this page.

The hierarchy of control

1. Elimination
2. Substitution
3. Isolation
4. Engineering
5. Administrative
6. PPE: the last line; the hazard is still there

Duties

- The business provides suitable PPE that fits, at no cost to you, keeps it in good order, and trains you
- You wear it as instructed, do not misuse it, look after it, and report problems

Fit testing

- Tight-fitting respirators need a fit test, before first use and regularly
- Clean-shaven where it seals
- Seal check every time you put it on

Know its limits

- A dust mask does not stop gases or vapours
- Glasses do not stop side splashes
- Gloves resist some chemicals, not all
- Hearing protection can mask warnings

PPE check

- ☐ Is it the PPE required for the task and the hazard?
- ☐ Does it fit me, and is it comfortable enough to wear all the time?
- ☐ Eye protection: lenses clear, not scratched or cracked; arms and strap sound
- ☐ Gloves: right material; no holes, tears, swelling or stiffness
- ☐ Hearing protection: cushions whole; earplugs new or clean
- ☐ Respirator: seal, straps and valves sound; filters in date; seal check done
- ☐ Hard hat and boots: no cracks or damage; within the replacement date
- ☐ Clean, and stored out of dust, sun and chemicals?
- ☐ Damaged or not fitting? Report it and replace it: **[Where to get PPE here]**

Report when

- PPE is damaged, worn or past its date
- It does not fit or hurts
- It is missing
- Report to: **[Who to report to here]**

The right PPE, fitted, worn the whole time, in good condition. Report it when it is not.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It does not train you to use a harness or breathing apparatus, and it is not a respirator fit test.

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