



## **Personal Protective Equipment Briefing Note**

Personal Protective Equipment is defined as all equipment which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work to protect them against one or more risks to their Health and Safety and any addition or accessory designed to meet that objective.

As a responsible company NCS recognises its duty to ensure all personnel comply with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992.

As Rail/Construction Personnel you must have the following items of PPE all of which is usually accompanied with the manufacturer's instructions for use on initial receipt:

- Safety Helmet
  - a Blue helmet will be issued and used by ALL PTS holders who have a Green Rectangle on their Sentinel Card
  - a White helmet will be issued to all other NCS personnel

The colour of helmet you must wear is detailed in [NCS/DOC/253 Blue Helmet Policy](#).

**There will be no deviation from this policy decision.**

- Gloves must be worn in accordance with [NCS/DOC/254 Gloves Policy](#)
- Safety Goggles / Glasses
- Ear Defenders
- High Visibility Clothing
- Safety Footwear

The following paragraphs are brief guidelines on your responsibilities as to the care and use of your PPE.

### **Head Protection**

The wearing of head protection is mandatory on all work sites.

Safety helmets should be inspected daily before use, check expiry date and look for any heavy abrasion or damage which would render it unfit for use. This should be reported to the company for further action.

In addition each safety helmet bears an imprint showing the year and month (or quarter) of manufacture and is usually valid for 2-3 years, however, the service life depends on you as an employee ensuring:

- a. No paint is applied to your helmet.
- b. No chemicals are applied to your helmet.

- c. Your helmet is stored away from strong sunlight and extremes of temperature.
- d. No alterations are made to the helmet, other than stipulated by the manufacturer.

To clean your helmet, rinse with a 1% solution of mild detergent and dry with a soft cloth (do not use abrasive cleaners). If detachable, remove the sweatband and wash with warm water.

### **Ear Protection**

Hearing protection must be provided to all Temporary Workers exposed to noise levels exceeding 85-dB (A), i.e. kango hammers, tampers, chainsaws etc.

Hearing protection must be worn on all sites where mandatory signs are displayed or when exposed to sound levels as stated above.

Hearing protection in general is classified into two main categories, 'Ear Defenders' and 'Ear Plugs'. Due to the nature of most work the company advise all Temporary Workers to carry Ear Defenders.

Each employee should ensure that the defenders in their possession are a correct fit and that the cushion seats on each cup provide an adequate seal around the ear.

Ear defenders should be examined prior to each use to check for any damage or brittleness to the cups and seals. Ear defenders should be kept clean by wiping non-absorbent parts with soapy water and allowing them to dry naturally.

### **Eye Protection**

Eye protection must be worn by all personnel engaged in work activities which pose a risk of injury to the eyes. Personnel not directly involved with the work process but in the locality must also wear eye protection where a reasonable foreseeable risk of injury exists.

Industrial eye protection is classified into various hazard categories. These categories are denoted by a marked code on the product themselves. The codes are detailed on the manufacturers instructions provided with the product and are usually classified similar to the list below:

B	=	Medium energy impact against high speed particles
F	=	Low energy impact against high speed particles
N	=	Anti Mist
3	=	Liquid Droplets
4	=	Large dust particles
5	=	Gas and fine particles
9	=	Molten Metals
1	=	Optical Quality (1 = high, 3 = low)

Eye protection must be kept in a carrying case or otherwise protected against abrasion and other damage when not being worn. Eye protection should be kept clean using a mild detergent mixed with warm water. It should be gently polished with a soft, clean, damp cloth and allowed to dry naturally.

## Contact Lenses

Temporary Workers undertaking rail work must inform their manager/supervisor if they wear contact lenses.

**It is a Network Rail requirement that contact lens wearers carry a pair of prescription glasses when on or about the line.**

## Hand Protection

Gloves of various designs provide protection against a range of industrial hazards including:

- a. Cuts and abrasions.
- b. Extremes of temperature, hot and cold.
- c. Skin irritation and dermatitis.
- d. Contact with toxic or corrosive liquids.

Gloves should be capable of giving hand protection from the various hazards involved in the work activities being carried out. The two main hazards involved in general duties are Manual Handling and Construction Work as detailed below: -

**Manual Handling:** hands may be pierced by abrasive, sharp or pointed objects or damaged by impact when handling goods. However, gloves should not be worn when working near moving equipment and machinery parts as the glove may get caught in the equipment and draw the hand and arm of the worker into moving machinery.

**Construction and Outdoor Work:** Keeping the hands warm and supple in cold weather is important when working on a site. Manual dexterity is lost when hands are cold, which can lead to accidents if articles are dropped. Gloves also protect against hazards involved in contamination of debris, which may contain disease spores that may seriously infect small cuts and abrasions on the hands.

To ensure against such hazards the company advise the use of general duty 'Hide Palm Rigger' gloves so as to reduce the risks to our operative from the above hazards. However, on occasion operatives may require other types of gloves where the personal issue gloves would be deemed unsuitable for the work activities being executed.

Despite the fact that hand protection is used to protect the hands it is essential that all operatives understand the need to wash their hands with a suitable skin cleanser after wearing hand protection; especially prior to eating food.

All gloves used should be kept in good condition, checked regularly and discarded if worn or deteriorated. Gloves should be free of holes or cuts and foreign materials and their shape should not be distorted. Gloves should only be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.

## Protective Clothing

Protective clothing for the body serves to indicate to approaching traffic such as trains, cranes and excavators through hi-visibility material and reflective strips, as well as providing protection against hazards that arise from heat, cold, bad weather etc.

The company will issue a high visibility vest to all Temporary Workers. This must be worn over all other clothing, to ensure the reflective strips are clearly visible.

High visibility clothing must be kept clean if it is to remain effective. Laundering should be carried out on a regular basis to prolong the life and effectiveness of such clothing.

High visibility clothing must not be used when it becomes faded or permanently soiled; it must also be inspected to ensure that it is in good condition.

## **Foot Protection**

Generally, safety footwear should be flexible, water resistant and absorb perspiration. Inflexible or unnecessarily bulky footwear will result in tired feet and legs.

Boots and not shoes are required where ankles need protection. You should consider the ability of the footwear to resist corrosion, abrasion and industrial wear and tear.

Particular hazards on the work sites include slipping on wet or greasy sleepers etc. nails piercing the mid sole, heavy objects being dropped or placed on the foot or twisting joints beyond their normal range due to uneven surfaces.

The selection of foot protection depends primarily on the hazard. However, comfort, style and durability should also be considered. The choice should be made on the basis of suitability for railway work and the requirements of the user. All safety boots should offer protection by means of ankle support, covered steel toecaps or other approved toecaps, steel mid-sole plates and oil, acid and slip resistant rubber soles. Always consult the manufacturer's specification, instructions and markings to confirm such details prior to purchase.

Safety boots are mandatory on all work sites and all Temporary Workers will have to satisfy the company that they are in possession of suitable foot protection before being allowed to undertake any work on our behalf.

Safety Footwear should be maintained in a good condition and cleaned in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Regular checks should be made to the laces, stitching and soles; all boots heavily worn or in a state of disrepair should be replaced.

[NCS/DOC/251 Protective Clothing and Equipment Receipt Form](#) records various issues to NCS staff and temporary workers.

**Please note that regular checks will be made during Site Safety Audits on individuals PPE, any operative who is found not to be in possession of the relevant PPE or NCS logoed for the work activities in hand will be asked to leave the work site. It is your responsibility to report any loss or defect of PPE to the relevant Supervisor / Manager ASAP.**