

FIRE SERVICES EXAMINATIONS BOARD

STUDY NOTE

EXAMINATION	LEADING FIREFIGHTERS EXAMINATION
PAPER	HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
SUBJECT	HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE
ITEM	THE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AT WORK – REGULATIONS 1992
STUDY NOTE No.	1311

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY NOTE

This study note has been prepared as the basis of study in connection with the qualifying examinations for promotion.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the information contained in the study note and understand how it should be applied:

The 'References' made at the end of the Study Note are included for information only and candidates will not be expected to study these as part of the bibliography.

THE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AT WORK REGULATIONS 1992

1. Introduction

These regulations set out the principles of selecting, providing, maintaining and using personal protective equipment. An awareness of the PPE regulations is important for a Crew Commander who may have to make a decision on appropriate personal protective equipment to be provided and used by personnel to reduce risks while dealing with an incident.

This study note briefly outlines these regulations.

2. Equipment Excluded from the Regulations

The following are not encompassed by the regulations:

- (a) Ordinary working clothes and uniforms which do not specifically protect the health and safety of the wearer.
- (b) Portable devices for detecting and signalling risks and nuisance (eg gas detectors and radiation dosimeters).
- (c) PPE used for protection while travelling on the public highway, eg crash helmets.
- (d) Equipment used during the playing of competitive sports, eg footballers' shin guards.
- (e) Where existing regulations already apply and require PPE to be supplied.

3. Examples of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Operational Work

Fire helmets.
Tunics and over-trousers.
Fire boots.
Surgical gloves.
Gloves.
High visibility jackets.
Safety glasses/goggles.
Life jackets.
Breathing apparatus.
Chemical protective suits.
Fire hoods.
Debris/dust mask.

4. The Provision of PPE

These regulations require employers to provide suitable PPE to any employees who may be exposed to risks to their health and safety while at work, where the risk cannot be controlled adequately by other means which are equally or more effective.

The Health & Safety Executive guidance on the regulations describes PPE as measures of last resort in the hierarchy of control measures; engineering controls and safe systems of work should always be considered first.

5. Selection of PPE

The regulations require employers to select PPE on the basis of a risk assessment to determine its suitability. The following is a brief outline of the process.

(a) Assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that:

- (i) PPE is correct for the particular risks involved.
- (ii) PPE is correct for the circumstances of its use.
- (iii) Whilst the Regulations do not require written risk assessments to be kept it is good practice to keep such records.
- (iv) Whether written or not, the assessment must include:
 - the risks identified and the risks that have not been avoided by other means;
 - the definition of the characteristics needed in the PPE in order to be effective; and
 - comparison between the characteristics of the PPE that is needed and that which is available.

(b) Suitable

To be suitable, PPE must be:

- (i) appropriate to the risks and workplace conditions;
- (ii) chosen to take account of ergonomic considerations and the state of health of the person wearing the PPE;
- (iii) capable of fitting the wearer correctly;
- (iv) effective in preventing or adequately controlling the risks without increasing the overall risk, so far as is practicable; and
- (v) compliant with the PPE (EC Directive) Regulations 1992 and relevant European standards or, where none exist, British Standards.

(c) Compatibility

Where employees are required to wear more than one type of PPE the items must be compatible and effective. For example, where breathing apparatus and helmets are worn at the same time the helmet must not interfere with the seal of the breathing apparatus mask, nor the mask preclude the safe wearing of the helmet.

(d) Review

The PPE assessment must be reviewed where there is a reason to suspect that the existing assessment is no longer valid or following significant changes to the PPE or the work etc. Any changes thus identified should then be implemented.

6. Maintenance and Replacement of PPE

Any PPE provided shall be maintained in an efficient state (including being replaced or cleaned as appropriate), in efficient working order and in good repair.

7. Accommodation

Appropriate accommodation must be provided for PPE when not in use.

8. Information

Managers must provide all staff using PPE with relevant information, instruction and training.

The information has to include:

- (a) the risks that the PPE is designed to avoid or limit;
- (b) the purpose and manner in which PPE works and should be used; and
- (c) any action the staff should take to keep the PPE in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

9. Use of PPE: Duties of Employees

Employees are required to:

- (a) use PPE in accordance with training and instruction;
- (b) return it to the accommodation after use; and
- (c) report to the line manager any loss or obvious defect in the PPE.

References

A Guide for Managers - Fire Service Health and Safety Guide Volume 2, issued by HM Fire Service Inspectorate.

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992, Guidance on Regulations