

## HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 2015

INFORMATION FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR | AUGUST 2016

### TOPIC 6 | PART 2

# Equipment and plant

**THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT CAME INTO EFFECT ON 4 APRIL 2016. IT MAKES THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS AND WORKPLACES A PRIORITY.**

This series of guides provides general information for the Education sector about the different elements of an effective health and safety system.

In these guides, “Boards/ECEs” refers to school Boards of Trustees, early childhood education (ECE) services and kōhanga reo as entities that meet the definition of Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) under the Act.

These guides draw on information published by WorkSafe New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. To keep fully informed about your health and safety obligations, visit WorkSafe’s website:  
<http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/hswa>

**This guide discusses the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The use of PPE is recommended when it is not possible to minimise the risk to an acceptable level. The guide defines what PPE is, and covers the Board’s/ECE’s duties, the worker’s duties, and other person’s duties in relation to PPE.**

### What is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

Protective clothing or equipment includes anything used to protect against the effects of contamination or physical harm. Some typical examples are:

- » clothing to cover the body – such as overalls and aprons
- » items to protect hands and feet – safety gloves and safety boots
- » breathing protection devices – dust masks or respirators
- » hearing protection devices – earmuffs and earplugs
- » eye safety protection – safety glasses, safety goggles, welding helmets
- » head protection – hard hats
- » skin protection – sunscreen, hats, long-sleeved clothes
- » safety harnesses and related equipment
- » life jackets and buoyancy aids

Examples of the use of PPE include:

- » using safety glasses when working with metals or wood in the workshop during technology class
- » wearing earmuffs when using noisy equipment both inside and outside the classroom – skill saws, drills, mowers, etc
- » wearing sunscreen, hats, long-sleeved clothes when doing outside activities during summer (e.g. sporting events, lunch breaks, playground duty, or excursions)
- » wearing high visibility jackets for road crossing patrol or on excursions
- » wearing safety gloves when handling corrosive or toxic materials such as chemicals
- » using dust masks when using sanders in technology classes

## What are the Board's/ECE's duties for providing PPE?

If personal protective equipment is to be used to minimise risks to health and safety, the Board/ECE must provide the personal protective equipment to workers at the workplace unless it has been provided by another PCBU, e.g. a contractor.

The Board/ECE must also ensure that the PPE provided is:

- » **suitable for the nature of the work** and any associated hazards
- » **a suitable size and fit** and reasonably comfortable for the worker who is to use or wear it
- » **maintained, repaired or replaced** so it continues to minimise risk to the worker who uses it
- » kept clean, **hygienic and in good working order**
- » used or worn by the worker
- » **compatible with any other PPE** that is required to be used or worn by the worker.

The Board/ECE must also provide workers with information about, and **training** and instruction in:

- » the **proper use** and wearing of PPE
- » the **storage and maintenance** of PPE

## What happens if a worker provides their own PPE?

The Board/ECE does not have to provide PPE to a worker if the worker genuinely and voluntarily chooses to provide their own PPE for reasons of their comfort or convenience **and** the Board/ECE is satisfied that the PPE is suitable.

However, a worker who has chosen to provide their own PPE may, after giving reasonable notice to the Board/ECE, choose that the Board/ECE provide them with PPE instead of providing it themselves.

## What are the worker's duties in relation to PPE?

When using PPE provided by the Board/ECE or when they have chosen to provide their own, workers must:

- » **use or wear the equipment** in accordance with any information, training or reasonable instruction by the Board/ECE
- » **not** intentionally misuse or damage the equipment
- » **inform the Board/ECE of any damage** to, defect in, or need to clean or decontaminate any of the equipment that the worker becomes aware of

## What are the Board's/ECE's duties in relation to providing PPE to others?

The Board/ECE must also provide PPE to other persons (e.g. students, parents, visitors, other volunteers) at the workplace to minimise risks to their health and safety. The Board/ECE must ensure that the PPE to be used or worn by any person other than a worker at the workplace is capable of minimising risks to that person's health and safety.

What is the duty of other persons to use or wear PPE? A person other than a worker must use or wear PPE at a workplace in accordance with any information, training, or reasonable instruction provided by the Board/ECE at the workplace. For example, visitors to building sites must wear hard hats, students in technology classes must use earmuffs and safety goggles when using skill saws, etc.

Need further information  
on equipment and plant?  
Read *Equipment and Plant*  
– Part 1