



نظام الشارقة للسلامة والصحة المهنية
Occupational Safety & Health Sharjah

حكومة الشارقة
هيئة الوقاية والسلامة
Government of Sharjah
Prevention And Safety Authority



Code of Practice

Personal Protective Equipment

OSHJ-CoP-27

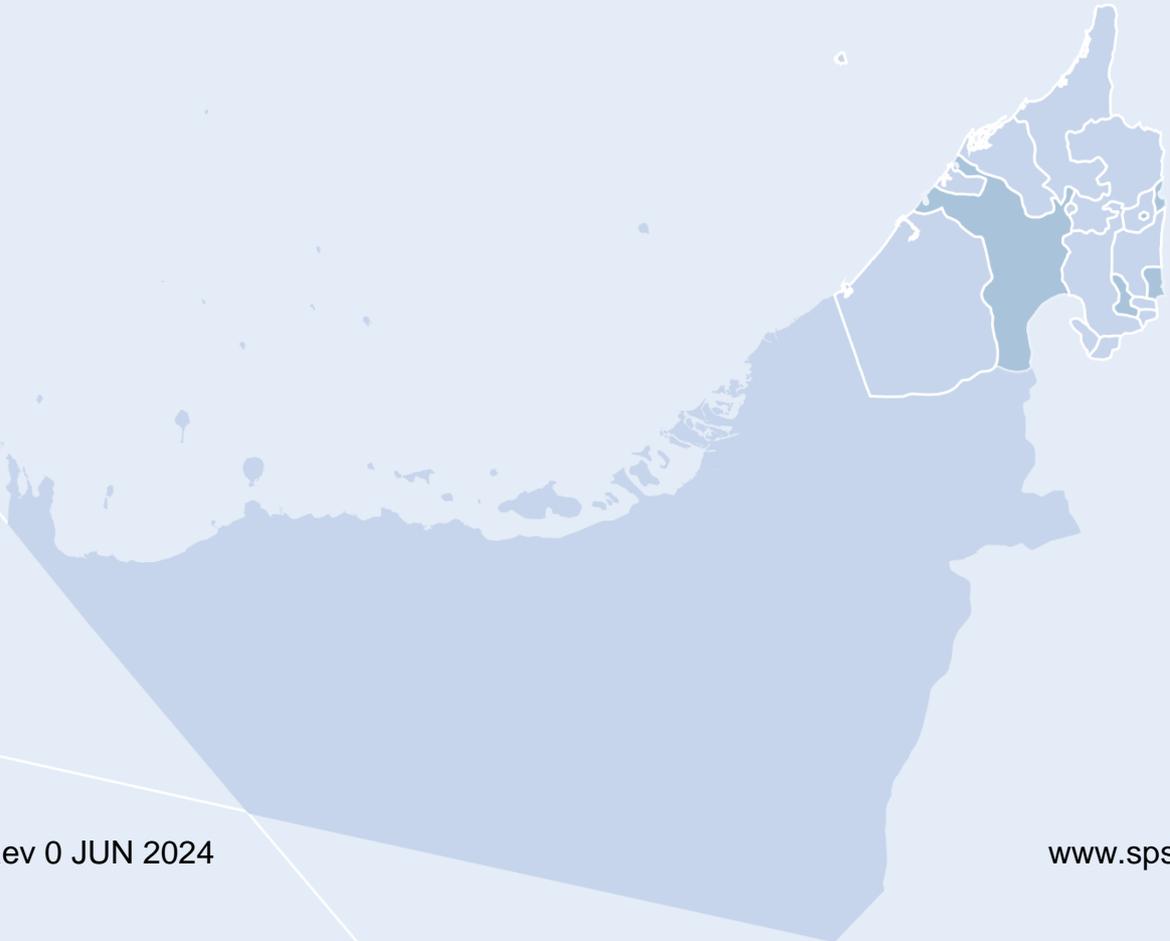


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1 Introduction

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is equipment that will protect the user against safety and health risks in the workplace. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses.

2 Purpose and Scope

This Code of Practice (CoP) has been developed to provide information to entities to assist them in complying with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah.

This Code of Practice (CoP) defines the minimum acceptable requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah, and entities can apply practices higher than, but not lower than those mentioned in this document, as they demonstrate the lowest acceptable level of compliance in the Emirate of Sharjah.

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

| | |
|--|--|
| Entities: | Government Entities: Government departments, authorities or establishments and the like in the Emirate. Private Entities: Establishments, companies, enterprises and economic activities operating in the Emirate in general. |
| Risk: | Is the combination of likelihood of the hazard causing the loss and the severity of that loss (consequences). |
| Risk Assessment: | The systematic identification of workplace hazards and evaluation of the risks associated. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further control measures where required. |
| Hazard: | Anything that has the potential to cause harm or loss (injury, disease, ill-health, property damage etc). |
| PPE: | Personal Protective Equipment. |
| Personal Protective Equipment: | Any device, appliance or equipment designed to be worn or used by an individual for protection against hazards. |
| RPE: | Respiratory Protective Equipment. |
| Respiratory Protective Equipment: | Any device used to protect the individual wearer against the inhalation of hazardous substances in the workplace air. |
| Buoyancy: | The ability or tendency of something to float in water or other fluid. |
| Manufacturer's Manual: | The instructions, procedures and recommendations provided by the manufacturer to ensure the safe operation, maintenance and repair of the equipment. |

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Entity Responsibilities

- Assess PPE to ensure it is suitable for the hazards it is protecting the user from;

- Maintain and store PPE as per the manufacturer's manual;
- Provide PPE, at no cost to all employees who may be exposed to a risk to their safety and health within the workplace;
- Provide information, instruction, supervision and training on how to use PPE correctly;
- Ensure employees use PPE correctly;
- That PPE must meet the criteria of the UAE or any higher internationally recognised standard.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Not endanger themselves or others;
- Cooperate with the entity and receive safety information, instruction, supervision and training and wear PPE where required;
- Report any activity or defect relating to the use of PPE which they know is likely to endanger the safety of themselves or that of any other person.

5 Requirements

The entity should regard PPE as the last resort to protect against risks to safety and health and only considered where the risk cannot be adequately controlled in other ways or where it provides additional protection from residual risk. Other controls and safe systems of work should be considered before PPE.

5.1 Risk Assessment

The purpose of the risk assessment is to ensure that the entity chooses PPE which is correct for the risks involved and for the circumstances of its use.

The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify suitable PPE as part of a work activity assessment. In more complex cases, a more detailed assessment should be undertaken and recorded. The details of the assessment should be kept readily accessible so that the basis of initial decisions can be understood at later reviews.

There are reasons for making PPE the last resort, including but not limited to:

- PPE only protects the person wearing it, whereas controlling the risk at source can protect everyone in the workplace;
- Maximum levels of protection are rarely achieved with PPE in practice and the actual level of protection is difficult to assess;
- Effective protection is only achieved by suitable PPE, correctly fitted and maintained and properly used;
- PPE may restrict the wearer to some extent by limiting movement or visibility.

When providing PPE, the entity should ensure that equipment is readily available and the employee should have clear instructions on where they can obtain it.

If more than one item of PPE is to be worn, they must be compatible with each other and when used together, should adequately control the risks. The manufacturer's manual can provide guidance on what PPE can or should be used together.

Further information on risk assessment can be found in OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control.

5.2 Selection and Suitability of PPE

Where potential risks are identified, there may be several types of PPE that would be suitable. When assessing the suitability of PPE the entity should consider and take account of the following factors, including but not limited to:

- The work activities and the risks for which protection is needed;
- The physical effort needed to do the job, how long the PPE has to be worn, and the requirements for visibility and communication;
- The environment and surrounding conditions, including the weather if working outside, temperature, noise and ventilation;
- The health of the person wearing the PPE. PPE made of certain materials should not be issued to workers if they are known to cause allergies;
- The ergonomic effects of the PPE, such as where heavy or bulky suits are worn that can cause or make worse existing musculoskeletal problems and cause thermal comfort problems;
- That PPE must meet the criteria of the UAE or any higher internationally recognised standard.

The entity should choose the PPE which provides the maximum protection while ensuring minimum discomfort to the wearer, uncomfortable PPE is unlikely to be worn correctly.

There will be considerable differences in the physical dimensions of different workers and therefore more than one type or size of PPE may be needed.

The entity should consider selection as part of a continuing programme which ensures the proper use and maintenance of the equipment, and the training and supervision of the employee.

5.3 Consultation with Employees

Employees who conduct work activities are usually best placed to know what is involved and what problems exist, and they should be consulted and involved by the entity in the selection of the equipment. Involving the employee or users with regard to fit, comfort, compatibility with the work activities and wearability is likely to lead to better levels of user acceptance and therefore better protection.

5.4 Types and Use of PPE

5.4.1 Eye and Face Protection

The main types of eye and face protection include:

- Safety Glasses/Eye Shields – May be separate lenses in a metal or plastic frame, similar in appearance to prescription glasses or have a single lens/frame moulding

sometimes called eye-shields. Most designs have side shields. Safety glasses can incorporate corrective lenses, while eye-shields may fit over prescription glasses;

- Goggles – These are made with a flexible plastic frame and one or two lenses with a flexible elastic headband. They give the eyes protection from all angles as the complete rim is in contact with the face. Some goggles are ventilated and may be unsuitable for protection against gases and fine dusts;
- Faceshields – These have one large lens with a frame and adjustable head harness or are mounted on a helmet. Most can be worn with prescription glasses. They protect the face but do not fully enclose the eyes.

The key factors to consider for eye and face protection, include but not limited to:

- Ensure the eye/face protection fits the user and does not fall off easily. It should be issued on a personal basis;
- If the user wears prescription glasses, consider providing them with prescription safety glasses;
- Consider anti-mist and ventilated eye protection;
- Follow the manufacturer's manual instructions when cleaning headbands and frames, use only anti-mist, antistatic fluids and cloths recommended by the manufacturer;
- Do not use when visibility is noticeably reduced, in these circumstances the lenses could be deeply scratched or worn, or the frame, headband or harness is deformed. They should be disposed of and replaced.

5.4.2 Head Protection

There are different types of head protection, including but not limited to:

- Industrial safety helmets – Protect against falling objects or impact with fixed objects, standard helmets offer limited resistance to flame. Helmets which give protection against impact at high or low temperatures are also available;
- Bump caps – Protect against bumping the head, bump caps do not offer adequate protection where there is a risk of falling objects;
- Firefighters' helmets – These are similar to industrial safety helmets, but cover more of the head and give greater protection against impact, heat and flame;
- Transport helmets – Protect against head injuries from falling off a motorcycle or bicycle, these helmets will be required PPE for employees using public roads and for off-road situations;
- Leisure helmets – Helmets used for activities, such as horse riding, canoeing or climbing, which protect against the risks of that particular activity. These helmets are required PPE for people using them in work circumstances.

The key factors to consider for head protection, include but not limited to:

- Use an adjustable chinstrap, if fitted, to make sure the safety helmet does not fall off;
- Clean the inside of the helmet and clean or replace sweatbands regularly;

- Check regularly that any damage to the outside is no more than shallow scratches or grazes and that the internal harness is not damaged or deformed;
- Dispose of and replace head protection after significant impact by a fixed or falling object. Head protection is unfit for use if the outside is deeply scratched, worn or deformed, the harness is damaged or deformed or it is beyond its usable protective life. Industrial safety helmets should be replaced periodically as per the manufacturer's manual;
- Wear the safety helmet so that the brim is level when the head is upright. Do not wear it sloping up or down as this will significantly reduce the protection it can provide;
- Do not wear head protection back to front as it reduces the protection provided;
- Do not customise head protection.

5.4.3 Hearing Protection

There are two main types of hearing protection:

- Earplugs - These fit into or cover the ear canal, to form a seal. They sometimes have a cord or neckband to prevent them being lost and can be permanent, reusable or disposable;
- Earmuffs - These are normally hard plastic cups, which fit over and surround the ears. They are sealed to the head by cushion seals. The inner surfaces of the cups are covered with a sound absorbing material, usually soft plastic foam. They can be headband or helmet mounted and some can have communication equipment built into them.

Hearing protection should only be used where risks to hearing remain despite the implementation of other measures to control the noise, or while those other measures are being developed or put in place.

5.4.4 Breathing Protection

There are two general types of respiratory protective equipment (RPE), based on the principle by which protection is provided to the user. The two types are:

- Respirators, include filter, gas filter, combined filter, filtering half-mask;
- Breathing apparatus, include self-contained breathing apparatus and compressed line breathing apparatus.

Respirators are devices that rely on filtering contaminants from workplace air before it is inhaled by the user. Respirators are not designed to be used in atmospheres with oxygen deficiency, where the concentration of oxygen is below 19.5% or where the concentration of unknown contaminants has not been evaluated.

Filtering face pieces, commonly know as disposable respirators or face masks, they are either entirely or substantially consist of filter material. There are two types of respirators and they are intended to be used for:

- A maximum of a single shift and not reusable; or
- More than a single shift and reusable.

Breathing apparatus, which gives an independent supply of breathable air, such as fresh air hose, compressed airline and self-contained breathing apparatus. Breathing apparatus may be used in a confined space or where the concentration of oxygen is below 19.5% or where the concentration of unknown contaminants has not been evaluated.

The key factors to consider for selection and use of RPE, include but not limited to:

- What type of contaminant the user must be protected against;
- The form of the contaminant;
- How toxic the contaminant is;
- The concentration of the contaminant;
- The duration of exposure to the contaminant;
- Individual sensitivity to the contaminant;
- Fit testing.

5.4.5 Body and Legs Protection

Protective clothing must offer some specific protection, there are four types of protective clothing, including:

- Separates – Jackets, trousers that only cover part of the body;
- Aprons – Worn over clothing and covers mainly the front of the body. It may have several different purposes such as protection against stains, burns and chemicals;
- Overalls, coveralls and body suits – Which cover the whole body;
- Safety chest waders – Is a one piece combining foot protection with leg and chest protection.

In addition to trousers for leg protection additional protection, including knee pads and gaiters can be used. Hard fibre or metal guards will help protect against some impacts.

The key factors to consider for body and leg protection, include but not limited to:

- Storing used/contaminated clothing separately from clean clothing;
- Selecting protective clothing carefully for chemical resistance and protection, especially against mixtures, and do not use for longer than the recommended breakthrough times. The manufacturer's manual will advise on breakthrough times for their products;
- Cleaning clothing according to the manufacturer's manual. For chemical suits hygienic cleaning may be possible, but industry guidance is that this clothing cannot be effectively decontaminated;
- Inspecting for wear and tear, loose seams and surface damage before use;
- Not wearing loose protective clothing near moving machinery;
- Safety clothing is suitable for weather conditions and does not add additional risks to the wearer.

5.4.6 Hands and Arms Protection

There are four types of hand and arm protection:

- Gloves – Hand only;
- Gloves with a cuff – Hand and wrist;
- Gauntlets/sleeves/long gloves – Hand, wrist and part of forearm;
- Sleeving/arm protection – Part or whole of forearm and/or upper arm.

The key factors to consider for hand and arm protection, include but not limited to:

- Ensuring that users are not allergic to or sensitised by the material;
- Ensuring they fit the wearer properly and are worn correctly for the work activity being conducted;
- Ensuring users can handle and remove the gloves carefully to avoid contamination of the hands and the inside of the glove;
- Checking gloves regularly and disposing of them if they are worn or have deteriorated. They should be free of holes or cuts and debris and their shape should not be distorted;
- Use in accordance with the manufacturer's manual;
- Ensure different sizes are available for the different employees.

5.4.7 Foot Protection

The different types of protective footwear, can include but not limited to:

- Safety boots or shoes - These are the most common type of safety footwear. They normally have protective toecaps and may also have other safety features including slip-resistant soles, penetration-resistant midsoles and insulation against extremes of heat and cold;
- Wellington boots - These are usually made of rubber and used for working in wet conditions. They are also useful in jobs where the footwear needs to be washed and disinfected for hygiene reasons. Similar to safety boots/shoes they can have other safety features built into them;
- Safety Clogs - They are traditionally made from beech wood and can be fitted with steel toecaps and thin rubber soles for quieter tread;
- Footwear for specific tasks, including foundry boots, chainsaw boots, chest high waders, etc.

The key factors to consider for foot protection, include but not limited to:

- Foot protection is available in a range of styles, including shoes, low ankle boots, high ankle boots, knee boots, thigh boots and chest high waders;
- The foot protection is the correct size for the wearer;
- Allowing time to break the shoes in to avoid blisters.

5.4.8 Drowning Protection

Life jackets or buoyancy aids should be worn where there is a foreseeable risk of drowning when working near water.

Buoyancy aids are worn to provide extra buoyancy to help a conscious person keep afloat. However, they will not turn over an unconscious person from a facedown position.

Life jackets provide enough buoyancy to turn an unconscious person face upwards and provide support with the mouth and nose clear of the water.

5.4.9 Personal Fall Protection

Personal fall protection systems comprise of either fall restraint/prevention or fall arrest systems.

Fall Restraint/Prevention Systems - These systems use a body holding device connected to a reliable anchor, preventing the user from reaching zones where the risk of fall exists, preventing the user from falling.

Fall Arrest System - These systems use a body holding device connected to a reliable anchor. They arrest and restrict a fall preventing the user from colliding with the ground or structures. The arrest system does not protect the user from the fall but stops the user before hitting a surface or other materials.

The key concerns when using personal fall protection systems, include but not limited to:

- Training must be provided for those using personal fall protection;
- In the hierarchy of controls, Fall Restraint is preferred to Fall Arrest;
- The entity must have a plan on what to do when an emergency occurs and how to respond to that emergency:
 - Providing a rapid and effective rescue where employees working at height have activated fall arrest systems, rescue equipment shall be available to retrieve employees as any delay might have severe consequences;
 - Providing first aid response to employees who have been rescued from height to prevent possible suspension trauma.

Further information of first aid can be found in OSHJ-CoP-16 First Aid at Work.

Further information on emergency plans can be found in OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response.

5.4.10 High Visibility Clothing

High visibility clothing is used where the visibility of employees is important, including but not limited to:

- Airport employees loading and unloading aeroplanes;
- Working on construction sites;
- Working in some industries where a particular background colour is specified.

The key factors to consider for high visibility clothing, include but not limited to:

- Selecting high visibility clothing suitable for the task;
- Clothing that protects from other hazards such as cold/hot weather is often available with a high visibility option;
- Outdoor employees may need different clothing at different times of the year.

5.5 Maintenance

The entity should ensure that PPE continues to provide protection and can achieve this by establishing an effective maintenance system that includes the following:

- Examination to ensure faults, damage, wear and tear are identified;
- Testing to ensure PPE is operating as intended;
- Cleaning, including disinfection if appropriate and drying of PPE;
- Repair and replacement.

A maintenance programme is required and will vary with the type of PPE and how it is used. The maintenance schedules should follow the instructions in the manufacturer's manual.

The entity should examine the PPE in general to ensure it is in good working order before being issued to the user. Such examinations should be carried out by appropriately trained and competent staff. The PPE should not be issued if found to be defective.

While most PPE will be provided on a personal basis, some items may be used by a number of employees. Where this is the case, the entity should make arrangements for the cleaning and disinfecting of PPE, to ensure there are no health risks to the next person using it.

Simple repairs can be carried out by a trained and competent employee, intricate repairs should only be conducted by employees with the required skills and technical knowledge.

The entity should ensure only the correct spare parts, as recommended by the manufacturer are used. If the technical knowledge is not available internally then contract services should be used from the manufacturer or supplier or a specialist maintenance firm.

When PPE exceeds its useable lifespan or is so badly damaged that repair is not possible, the entity should replace the PPE at no cost to the employee.

The entity shall record and retain records of PPE issued to employees and the PPE maintenance performed.

5.6 Storage of PPE

The entity shall ensure that appropriate storage is provided for PPE when it is not being used, including but not limited to:

- Prevent damage from chemicals, sunlight, high humidity, heat and accidental knocks;
- Prevent contamination from dirt and harmful substances;
- Reduce the possibility of losing the PPE;
- Enable the sufficient drying of PPE to ensure its effectiveness is maintained, such as retaining its insulating capabilities if used in humid, hot environments.

6 Training

The entity must ensure users are trained in the proper use of PPE, how to correctly fit and wear it, and what its limitations are. The extent of the training that is required will depend on the type of equipment, how frequently it is to be used and the needs of the people being trained. The entity must ensure the managers and supervisors are aware of why PPE is being used and how to use it correctly.

The entity should ensure the training is a combination of practical and theoretical and delivered in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- Explaining the risks present and why PPE is needed;
- The operation, performance and limitations of the PPE;
- Provide information and instructions on the selection, use and storage of PPE. Written operating procedures such as permits-to-work involving PPE should be explained;
- Factors which can affect the protection provided by the PPE, including other protective equipment, personal factors, working conditions, inadequate fitting, and defects, damage and wear;
- Recognising defects in PPE and arrangements for reporting loss or defects;
- How to put on, wear, adjust and remove PPE safely;
- The inspection of the PPE before use;
- How to maintain the PPE, including cleaning and the replacement of certain components;
- Safe storage of PPE.

Periodic refresher training should be conducted to ensure employees competency is maintained, including but not limited to:

- Where training certification has expired;
- Where identified as part of a training needs analysis;
- Where risk assessment findings identify training as a measure to control risks;
- Where there is a change in legal requirements;
- Where incident investigation findings recommend refresher training.

The entity must record and maintain accurate training records of OSH training provided to employees.

Further information on training can be found in OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence.



7 References

OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control

OSHJ-CoP-16: First Aid at Work

OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response

OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence

8 Document Amendment Record

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| TITLE | Personal Protective Equipment | | |
| DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD | | | |
| Version | Revision Date | Amendment Details | Pages Affected |
| 1 | 15 SEP 2021 | New Document | N/A |
| 2 | 26 JUN 2024 | The document changed from a guideline to a code of practice. The document code was changed from OSHJ-GL-07 to OSHJ-CoP-27. | 2,3,11,12 |
| 2 | 26 JUN 2024 | Checklist Added | 16 |

9 APPENDIX 1: Checklist

The checklist is used by Prevention and Safety Authority to monitor compliance levels during audit and inspection operations; it is not intended for use by government entities or private establishments.

Every code of practice or guideline published by the Prevention and Safety Authority within the Sharjah occupational safety and health system contains requirements that employers in the Emirate of Sharjah must comply with. Each manual includes an inspection checklist that summarizes the essential items used by the SPSA auditor to verify that government entities or private establishments comply with the manual's requirements. Auditors can add additional essential items as necessary. The inspection checklist also includes a manual reference for each essential item, as well as a sample of acceptable compliance evidence for each item. The SPSA's auditor may request additional compliance evidence based on the item's condition, as well as the severity and potential impact of non-compliance.

The SPSA's auditor uses the inspection checklist to provide a comprehensive report on the entity's status. We will use the same checklist to monitor manual standard violations. Non-compliance with these standards constitutes a violation of Executive Council Resolution No. 15 of 2021 regarding the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System. If the SPSA's auditor detects non-compliance, they can issue violations based on the approved violation list.

In this manual, the SPSA provides information and standards that employers conducting activities in the Emirate of Sharjah must adhere to. This is to ensure the safety of workers, property, and the environment. Adhering to the requirements of this manual helps improve the level of occupational safety and health at the workplace, and it shields private establishments from potential violations or financial penalties for non-compliance.

The Emirate of Sharjah's Executive Council Resolution stipulates that employers must exercise due diligence to ensure the safety and health of workers, contractors, visitors, and all those affected by the employer's activities. To avoid non-compliance, employers must ensure adherence to the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System requirements. Entities should develop their procedures and inspection checklists according to their activities, nature of work, and risk level.

Depending on recorded or reported incidents, and as necessary, the SPSA may amend the requirements in this manual. As a result, the attached inspection checklist may change. Occupational safety and health practitioners must stay up-to-date on published standards and any changes to the inspection checklist attached to each manual.

Audit/Inspection Checklist

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----|
| Code Title | Personal protective equipment | Code No. | OSHJ-CoP-27 | Rev. No. | 1.0 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----|

| Sr. | Checklist Item | Clause in the Code | Acceptable means of compliance |
|-----|---|--|---|
| 1. | Are the personal protective equipment suitable and available? | 5.1, 5.2 : Risk assessment, selection and suitability of PPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – check the PPE availability – verify the suitability of PPE |
| 2. | Are the PPE maintained properly and are maintenance records retained? | 5.5 : Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – check PPE maintenance records |
| 3. | Are the personal protective equipment stored appropriately? | 5.6 : Storage of PPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – check the PPE storage |
| 4. | Are the employees provided with necessary training and training record available? | 6 : Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Check Training Records |