

High-visibility clothing

Workplace transport site safety information sheet WPT11

This information will be useful to anyone who uses workplace transport or who works where it is used. It will help employers, managers and supervisors to assess their workplace and make improvements. The checklists will help you to prepare your risk assessment.

High-visibility clothing is a form of personal protective equipment (PPE) worn so that people can be easily seen by drivers and pedestrians on site. High-visibility clothing should be used alongside other safety measures, particularly by those working near traffic. The clothing must be properly designed using highly reflective material so that the wearer can be easily seen against any background.

Common problems

Problems generally occur when correct procedures and/or high-visibility clothing is not used.

Not wearing high-visibility clothing: People put themselves at risk of having an accident by not wearing high-visibility clothing. For example, in hot weather high-visibility clothing can become uncomfortable and people might be tempted to stop wearing it.

Incorrect items or incomplete clothing worn: People may wear high-visibility clothing but it might not meet the required BS EN 471 standards. For example, people may wear trousers but not a matching jacket.

Wearing dirty or worn high-visibility clothing: Over time high-visibility clothing wears and gets dirty, which makes it less visible.

Safety measures not in use: High-visibility clothing should be used with other safety measures. For example, marked walkways should be provided for pedestrians, where necessary, so that they are separated from vehicles.



Checklist – what to look out for

- People not wearing high-visibility clothing.
- Incorrect items or incomplete clothing worn.
- Dirty or worn high-visibility clothing.
- Other safety measures not in place to complement the use of high-visibility clothing.
- High-visibility clothing not being worn by site users in hot weather because it is uncomfortable.

How can you deal with common problems?

Most common problems can be easily avoided or overcome.

Make sure all users wear correct high-visibility clothing: Before people enter your site make sure they are wearing the correct clothing. If they aren't, do not allow them to work on site.

High-visibility clothing must be supplied to employees free of charge. Employees should be supervised to make sure that they wear the clothing correctly and whenever it is needed. It should meet BS EN 471 standards and be selected for best contrast with the work area background. For example, any



high-visibility garment must cover all sides of the torso and consist of a minimum visible size of 0.4 m² (ie vest size). Clothing should be clean and useable. It should be checked and registered before being given to employees and kept safely and correctly when not in use.

For added safety, workers should wear light-coloured clothing (also contrasting with the background environment where possible) on areas of their body not covered by the high-visibility clothing. Trousers may be as effective because they can be easily seen. High-visibility clothing must be of the right fit, worn correctly and fastened in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

Provide your employees with the information, instruction and training they need to use high-visibility clothing correctly. This should include an explanation of the risks, why the clothing is needed, and how and when it should be worn.

Make sure all high-visibility clothing is clean and in good condition: Maintain your high-visibility clothing to the required standards. Replace clothing that has worn out or is no longer suitable for work on your site.

Regularly monitor the use of high-visibility clothing: Make sure you know that it is being used by people on site and purchase additional items of clothing if required.

Brief site users on health and safety procedures: During site inductions, brief staff and contractors on safe working procedures and what high-visibility clothing they should wear. Explain to them the reasons for wearing high-visibility clothing and the potential consequences for not wearing it.

Check and update site rules: It is important that your site rules are up to date and reflect the current use and layout of your site. Site users should be familiar with the site rules.

Make sure all possible complementary safety measures are used: High-visibility clothing should be used with other safety measures to minimise the health and safety risks to site users.

Checklist

- Tell workers about health and safety procedures.
- Check and update site rules. Make sure that staff know and understand them.
- Regularly monitor the use of high-visibility clothing.
- Make sure all users wear correct high-visibility clothing that is in accordance with BS EN 471.

Checking your site

Monitor staff use of high-visibility clothing to check they are complying with procedures and the correct clothing is being worn. Speak to your staff to see when and where they encounter problems. Regularly check high-visibility clothing for wear, cleanliness and suitability. Consider the following:

- Have potential risks been assessed?
- Is the high-visibility clothing suitable for the risk?
- Is it suitable for the job?
- Is it suitable for the wearer?
- Is it compatible with other forms of PPE?
- Does the clothing meet BS EN 471 standards?

For more information, see the *Site inspection: Workplace transport checklist* at www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport.

Checklist

- Monitor staff use of high-visibility clothing.
- Check high-visibility clothing is clean and in good order.
- Check your site rules are up to date and in accordance with industry standards.
- Ask staff if they experience problems with wearing high-visibility clothing and whether they see others wearing it.

Where to get help

If you have a problem with the use of high-visibility clothing on your site, you might be able to fix it yourself, eg amend site rules or buy some high-visibility clothing. If you are unsure, speak to your health and safety workplace representative or contact HSE for advice. In most cases, if you are unable to do the work yourself, you will need to get advice or purchase the clothing you need from a safety clothing and equipment supplier.

Checklist

- Can you or your company solve the problem yourselves?
- Do you need to buy additional high-visibility clothing?
- Contact safety clothing and equipment suppliers.
- Speak to your health and safety representative and talk to your staff.
- Consult HSE about any problems if necessary.

What might it cost?

A full set of high-visibility clothing can cost £30–£100 per person. Here are some example prices for individual items of clothing:

- Trousers cost from around £15.
 - Waistcoats cost from around £10.
 - Coats cost around £20–£30.
- (These costs are a guide and may vary.)

Find out more

A short guide to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 Leaflet INDG174(rev1) HSE Books 2005 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6141 1) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf

Clothing should meet British Standard for high-visibility warning clothing: BS EN 471:2003+A1:2007 *High-visibility warning clothing for professional use. Test methods and requirements* British Standards Institution

Workplace transport safety: An overview Leaflet INDG199(rev1) HSE Books 2005 (single copy free or priced packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 2821 6) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg199.pdf

Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide HSG136 (Second edition) HSE Books 2005 ISBN 978 0 7176 6154 1

Management of health and safety at work. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L21 (Second edition) HSE Books 2000 ISBN 978 0 7176 2488 1

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

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This document contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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