**Guidance for Importing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

**Safety Requirements**

Before you place PPE on the market you have a legal duty to ensure the products you supply are safe. You need to ensure the manufacturer has met the essential health and safety requirements. A list of these requirements can be found in [Annex II of Regulation (EU) 2016/425 on personal protective equipment](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2016/425/annex/II).

Importers must ensure the PPE has been assessed by the manufacturer, using an appropriate conformity assessment procedure. If you have reason to believe that PPE is not in conformity with the applicable health and safety requirements, it must not be placed on the market.

There are 3 risk categories for PPE: category I, category II and category III. The details of these categories can be found in [Annex I on the categories of risk against which PPE is intended to protect users.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2016/425/annex/I)

**Labelling, including UKCA mark**

* The product must be marked with the name or registered trademark of the manufacturer as well as their contact address. If the product is too small, this information can be on the packaging or in the accompanying instructions instead
* The manufacturer must mark the product with a type, batch, model or serial number or some other element to identify the PPE, so in the event of any issues, these details can be used to trace the products
* The name or registered trademark of the importer as well as their postal address must also be marked on the product. If the product is too small, this information can be on the packaging or in the accompanying instructions instead
* PPE being imported into GB must be marked with either the CE mark or the UKCA mark. If they are being distributed in both markets and have the relevant safety documentation, both the UKCA and CE mark can be applied. For Northern Ireland goods, the UKNI and CE marks must both be applied
* There will also be additional required warnings identified in the relevant safety standard for the product e.g. helmets

**Warnings and Instructions**

PPE must be supplied with a set of clear, legible instructions in understandable English. These instructions must contain at least the information below, which is taken from Annex II of Regulation 2016/425.

* Instructions for storage, use, cleaning, maintenance, servicing and disinfection. Cleaning, maintenance or disinfectant products recommended by manufacturers must have no adverse effect on the PPE or the user when applied in accordance with the relevant instructions
* Performance as recorded during relevant technical tests to check the levels or classes of protection provided by the PPE
* Where applicable, accessories that may be used with the PPE and the characteristics of appropriate spare parts
* Where applicable, the classes of protection appropriate to different levels of risk and the corresponding limits of use
* Where applicable, the month and year or period of obsolescence of the PPE or of certain of its components
* Where applicable, the type of packaging suitable for transport
* The significance of any markings. Warning and markings to ensure the user is safe must, where possible, be in the form of pictograms or ideograms. They must be perfectly visible and legible and remain so throughout the foreseeable useful life of the PPE
* The risk against which the PPE is designed to protect
* The reference to Regulation (EU) 216/425 on personal protective equipment and, where applicable, the references to other UK legislation
* The name, address and identification number of the approved body or bodies involved in the conformity assessment of the PPE
* References to the relevant designated standard(s) used, including the date of the standard(s), or references to the other technical specifications used
* The internet address where the declaration of conformity can be accessed.

**Compliance Documentation**

As an importer of PPE, you have a legal duty to ensure that the products you supply are safe. This can be done by making sure the manufacturer has carried out a relevant conformity assessment procedure to ensure their products are safe.

The manufacturer or their authorised representative in the UK must issue a Declaration of Conformity. You should request and thoroughly check all technical documents before you purchase the goods. You must keep copies of this documentation for a period of 10 years. You must be able to provide copies on request to Market Surveillance Authorities.

* The manufacturer can demonstrate their products are safe by drawing up technical documentation. This must include a risk assessment to identify the risks applying to the PPE. The product design must take account of the risk assessment for the intended and foreseeable uses of the PPE
* The PPE can be assessed by a test house which will produce a test report. This test report should include details of all relevant tests, and any standard(s) applied to confirm the PPE meets all the essential health and safety requirements
* The goods can be assessed by a UK Approved Body. This is where an accredited test laboratory independently verifies the design of the product, and the technical documentation meets the requirements of the essential health and safety requirements. The Approved Body will then issue a type-examination report and type-examination certificate. This accredited test report gives a far higher degree of confidence that the tests have been carried out correctly by a competent laboratory
* Once the conformity assessment has been completed, the manufacturer must draw up a Declaration of Conformity which references how the product was assessed

**A Declaration of Conformity should contain the following:**

* PPE (product, type, batch or serial number)
* Name and address of the manufacturer or his authorised representative
* ‘This declaration of conformity is issued under the sole responsibility of the manufacturer’
* Identification of PPE allowing traceability; where necessary for the identification of the PPE, a colour image of sufficient clarity may be included
* Confirmation the PPE meets Regulation (EU) 2016/425 Personal Protective Equipment
* References to the test standards used to assess the product
* If applicable the approved body ‘name and number’ who performed the Type Examination and issued the Type Examination Certificate
* Signed on behalf of the manufacturer with a date and place of the signature

**When you import goods into the UK, they can be subject to product safety checks at the border. In this instance you will be requested to provide some of the documents detailed below:**

* A copy of the Declaration of Conformity issued by the manufacturer
* A copy of a relevant test report to demonstrate how the product was tested and the results of that test
* Authorities may also request copies of a detailed packing list which should show the quantity of each item including number of pieces and cartons. Also, any marks or numbers which will enable each carton to be identified and located
* This information must be supplied in English

**When sourcing your products, you should:**

* Buy from a reputable supplier and always obtain an invoice
* Make sure the product/packaging is marked with the name and address of the manufacturer
* Ask to see proof that the product is safe (a test certificate and Declaration of Conformity)

**The UK government provides further guidance on** [**Placing manufactured products on the market in Great Britain - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/placing-manufactured-goods-on-the-market-in-great-britain)