



# Personal protective equipment

(PPE) for community volunteers



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# Acknowledgements

This handbook has been written by Volunteer Cornwall and the Cornwall Community Flood Forum. Additional information has been sourced from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

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## Introduction

As a community volunteer, you may be provided with some equipment to help promote your safety and wellbeing. This equipment will help to reduce some of the risks you might face as long as it is used correctly and looked after properly.

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# The equipment

## High visibility vest, jacket and trousers

You might be issued with a high visibility vest or waterproof jacket and trousers.

These will help make you more visible to other volunteers, the Emergency Services and members of the public. Remember, there may be many vehicles moving around and being highly visible can help prevent accidents. Waterproof clothing will also help to keep you dry and warm which can be important to avoid hypothermia. It can also serve as a form of identification to others of your role as a community volunteer.

It is important that your PPE clothing is a good fit – if it isn't, ask for a more suitable size. Check that waterproof trousers are not too long and snag beneath your footwear which could be a slip or trip hazard.



Also, make sure use of your PPE does not increase the overall level of risk or add new risks. For example, if you are wearing the hood to your high visibility waterproof jacket make sure you can still hear and see what is going on around you.

If you are instructed to wear PPE in response to a perceived risk, it is important that it is worn every time you are exposed to that risk. Never allow exemptions for those jobs which take 'just a few minutes'!

## Safety whistle

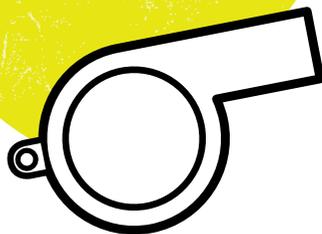
You might also be issued with a safety whistle.

The whistle can be used to summon help if you are in danger or come across an emergency situation. You therefore need to keep it on your person and somewhere readily accessible.

Your whistle may come with a cord so it can be hung around your neck so it can be hung around your neck. If you wear it in this way, always ensure the whistle is kept close to your person or tucked within your clothing so it does not get caught or snagged on anything.

This is an example of the type of equipment you may use to promote the health and safety of community volunteers. However, it is important that you carry out a risk assessment to identify the full extent of possible risks you may face and provide the appropriate level of equipment in response to the risks.

The whistle can be used to summon help if you are in danger or come across an emergency situation.



# Looking after your PPE

Although it may seem like common sense, it is important that you look after your PPE properly.

That means ensuring it is clean and ready for use at all times. Mud and dirt can reduce the effectiveness of the reflective strips for example.

Always follow the instructions on the label for cleaning and when not in use, store your PPE in a clean and dry location away from chemicals and strong sunlight.

Somewhere on the clothing should be a “CE” label which shows that the PPE meets the necessary standards. It is important that you do not amend or remove this label.

Periodically, at least once every 6 months – and before and after each use – you should make a visual inspection of the PPE to look for any signs of damage or excessive wear.

If your PPE becomes damaged in any way, ask a competent person (such as your group co-ordinator or supervisor) to check if it is still usable.

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# Any questions?

Any PPE you have been given is likely to have been identified as necessary as part of the overall risk assessment for the activities you will be carrying out as a community volunteer.

Remember, it can only help keep you safe if you are wearing it and using it properly.

If you have any queries or questions about the equipment, please speak to your group co-ordinator or supervisor who should be happy to help.

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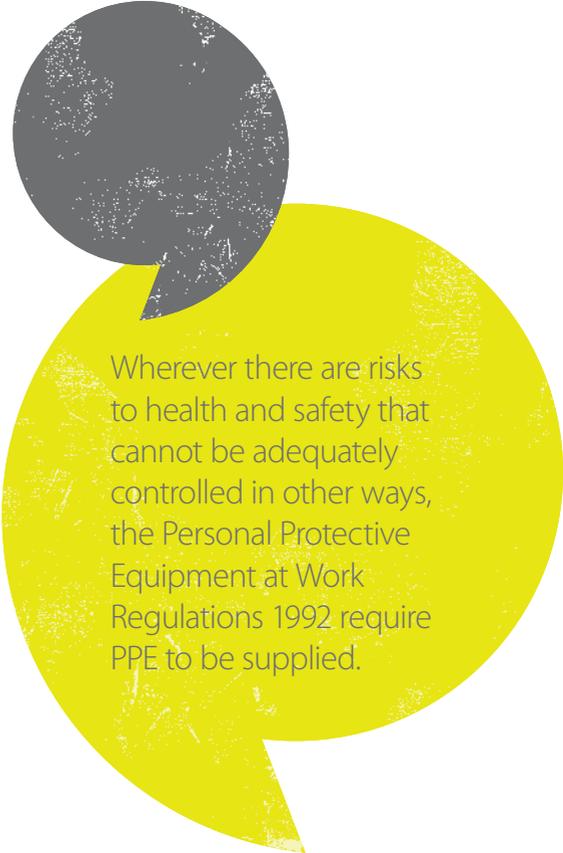
# What do the Regulations require?

PPE should be used as a last resort.

Wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways, the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 require PPE to be supplied. The Regulations also require that PPE is:

- Properly assessed before use to make sure it is fit for purpose
- Maintained and stored properly
- Provided with instructions on how to use it safely
- Used correctly by employees

*Information in this section has been reproduced from: Health and Safety Executive (HSE), "Personal protective equipment (PPE) at work: A brief guide". HSE Leaflet INDG174(rev2), Published 06/2013.*



Wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways, the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 require PPE to be supplied.

# Further information

For further information on assessing risk, selecting appropriate PPE and its correct use refer to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) and the following leaflet: Health and Safety Executive (HSE), **“Personal protective equipment (PPE) at work: A brief guide”**. HSE Leaflet INDG174(rev2), Published 06/2013.

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## Summary

- Ensure all equipment including PPE clothing is used in conjunction with a risk assessment
- Always make sure your PPE clothing is a good fit
- Keep all equipment including PPE clothing clean and maintained according to the manufacturer's guidelines
- Ensure any equipment including PPE clothing is inspected regularly for any signs of damage or excessive wear – at least once every 6 months

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As a community volunteer, you may be provided with some equipment to help promote your safety and wellbeing. This equipment will help to reduce some of the risks you might face as long as it is used correctly and looked after properly.

This information pack is intended as a guide only. Whilst the information it contains is believed to be correct, Cornwall Community Flood Forum can take no responsibility for actions taken based on the information contained in this pack.

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