

Technical Information

PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE) Guidelines on the use of PPE for centre technicians

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Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) consists of:

- Steel-capped boots/shoes
- Hearing defenders
- Safety glasses
- Protective gloves
- Protective clothing

These items must be provided at all IDEST Test Centres for use by the Centre Technicians under the IDEST Code of Practice CP11:2011. The purpose of using these items of equipment is to reduce the possibility of personal injury during the testing of diving cylinders and servicing cylinder valves.

During visits by IDEST Inspectors a check is made that the centre is providing these items for the use of their technicians. A check is made that the technicians are using such items of PPE at the appropriate stages of cylinder testing and valve servicing.

It has come to our attention that centres are indeed providing PPE for the use of their technicians as laid down in CP11:2011. However, many technicians are not using this equipment as advised and are making personal decisions to work without this protection.

The PPE that is used by most technicians is steel-capped boots or shoes. This is a wise decision in view of the weight of cylinders, especially when filled with water. If shoes are not worn, toes can get crushed and any insurance claim would be thrown out with the reasoning that the crushed toes would not have happened if steel toe-capped shoes had been used.

Ear defenders, protective glasses and protective gloves are not being used extensively across centres being visited and it concerns inspectors that technicians are choosing an unsafe approach to their working environment and practices.

There is no legislation that forces technicians to use the PPE provided. It is up to the individual to decide when to use and what item of PPE to wear. If this is your situation consider the long-term effects that may occur if PPE is not used.

There is evidence that tinnitus can be brought on in later life by not using ear defenders when using compressors and ultrasonic cleaners. Eye-sight could be lost due to flying debris and skin rashes could be caused by not using suitable protective gloves when using hazardous liquids as cleaners.

IDEST's advice is that suitable PPE should be used at all stages of cylinder testing and valve servicing under CP11:2011

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