

Store and maintain PPE correctly & replace



Objective:

This guide supports companies in using personal protective equipment (PPE) safely, in compliance with standards and economically. Correct storage, care and timely replacement increase product safety, extend service life and support compliance with European requirements.

The legal basis is the **PPE Regulation (EU) 2016/425** as well as supplementary requirements from occupational safety and manufacturer specifications.

Why storage, maintenance and replacement are crucial

PPE only provides reliable protection when it is in perfect condition. Improper storage or delayed replacement can impair the protective effect – with risks for employees and companies.

Advantages of systematic PPE maintenance:

- ▶ consistent protective effect
- ▶ lower accident and liability risk
- ▶ better planning of replacement procurement

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Storage conditions for PPE

As a general rule: PPE must be stored in such a way that material, function and protective effect are preserved.

Recommended storage conditions:

- ▶ dry, clean and well ventilated
- ▶ protected from direct sunlight (UV radiation)
- ▶ away from heat sources, chemicals and oils
- ▶ protected from mechanical damage

Practical examples:

- ▶ Gloves and textiles: in closed cabinets or boxes
- ▶ Respiratory protection: dust-free, separate from hazardous substances
- ▶ Helmets: tension-free, do not place on the shell

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Shelf life & replacement intervals

PPE is subject to a **limited lifespan**, which depends on material, frequency of use and environmental conditions.

Important notes:

- ▶ Observe manufacturer's information on shelf life
- ▶ Observe expiry dates (e.g. for respiratory filters)
- ▶ Replace PPE immediately after exceptional stress

Typical reasons for replacement:

- ▶ visible damage
- ▶ Material fatigue or deformation
- ▶ after a fall, chemical exposure or heavy soiling

Company obligation: Employers must ensure that only functional PPE is used.

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Visual inspection before each use

PPE should be briefly checked before use. This visual inspection is a simple but effective Contribution to safety.

Checkpoints:

- ▶ Cracks, breaks or deformations
- ▶ Clasps, straps and seals intact
- ▶ Cleanliness and hygienic condition

Tip: Immediately discard and replace damaged PPE.

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Checklist: PPE storage & care

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- PPE stored dry and clean
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- Protected from UV light and heat
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- Manufacturer's information known
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- Regular visual inspection carried out
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- Replacement intervals defined
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Download template: PPE maintenance plan

Recommended contents of a PPE maintenance plan:

- ▶ PPE type / product
- ▶ Area of application
- ▶ Storage location
- ▶ Inspection interval
- ▶ Replacement date
- ▶ Responsible person

A structured maintenance plan facilitates documentation, supports internal audits and promotes the planregular replenishment.



Conclusion:

Correct storage, regular maintenance and timely replacement are central components of effective PPE management. They ensure the protective function, fulfil European requirements and contribute to greater safety and cost-effectiveness in the workplace.

Benefits for companies: Higher product safety, lower failure risks and better predictability when purchasing PPE.