

# GUIDE FOR THE CATEGORISATION OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

## Disclaimer

Readers' attention is drawn to the fact that this guide is intended only for facilitating the application of Directive 89/686/EEC and it is the text of the Directive and the provisions transposing it, which are legally binding. This Guide is not a legally binding interpretation of the directive.

The European Commission maintains this guide and makes it publicly available to enhance public access to information about its initiatives. However the Commission accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to the information in this guide.

- ***The Purpose of the Guide***

Article 8 of Council Directive 89/686/EEC(a) sets out the procedures for assessing the conformity of PPE to the essential health and safety requirements. Four different conformity assessment procedures are defined for the whole range of PPE products (see article 1 and Annex I of the PPE-D.).

The Guide was drawn up because the provisions of article 8 are not sufficiently exhaustive for practical application.

It is solely the manufacturer's or his authorised representative's responsibility to select the correct conformity assessment procedure to be applied. The "Guide for Categorisation" is therefore primarily directed towards these two parties. However, Notified Bodies, market surveillance authorities and other stakeholders may also benefit from this information.

- ***The concept "Category"***

PPE protects its intended user against one or more hazards. Exposure to hazards may lead to injury. The seriousness of these injuries has been categorised as follows: category I (less serious injuries), category III (very serious injuries leading to irreversible harm to health and/or death) and category II summarising the remaining degrees of seriousness of injuries.

The PPE Directive defines one or more procedures for conformity assessment for each of the three categories. The conformity assessment procedures become more onerous as the degree of seriousness of potential injury increases:

- (a) "Category I" : declaration of conformity by the manufacturer on his own responsibility (Article 8, paragraph 3)

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(a) OJ.L 399 of 30.12.1989, p.18 amended by Directives 93/68/EEC (OJ. L 220, 30.08.1993, p.1 ) and 93/95/EEC (OJ. L 276, 9.11.1993, p.11)

- (b) "Category II" : declaration of conformity by the manufacturer after a notified body has drawn up an EC type-examination certificate for a PPE model (Article 8, paragraph 2)
- (c) "Category III": declaration of conformity by the manufacturer after a notified body has drawn up an EC type-examination certificate for a PPE model and after a notified body (either the same one that drew up the EC type-examination certificate or another one) has carried out the quality control of the PPE manufactured (Article 8, paragraph 4).

- **How to use the "Guide for Categorisation"**

The 'Guide for Categorisation' assists to identify the appropriate "Category" (see above) associated with a given PPE product. In accordance to this "Category", the adequate procedure for conformity assessment has to be selected.

The guide collates the different types of PPE and the corresponding category (I, II, III). "0" in the column "Category" identifies equipment not within the scope of the Directive.

***Notwithstanding the conformity assessment procedure to be applied, PPE must meet all the essential health and safety requirements!***

- **The status of the "Guide for Categorisation"**

The competent services of the Directorate General - Enterprise of the European Commission in collaboration with the government experts of Member States, representatives of European industry, European standardisation organisations and Notified bodies elaborated commonly agreed interpretations of the Directive as to the "categorisations" (see above).

The GUIDE compiles these interpretations and represents a reference for ensuring consistent application of the directive by all those involved. The existence of these harmonised interpretations is expected to minimise the number of safeguard clause applications, at least those originating from divergent interpretations.

This Guide is not a legally binding interpretation of the directive.

These interpretations may be amended where necessary, taking into account the experience gained whilst applying the Directive.

- **IMPORTANT : Items modified or currently suspended due to ongoing discussion**

N°	Issue
10.1	Second part of 10.1 reading " <i>..including swimming aids and inflatable buoys which are not regarded as toys (for use exclusively in shallow water)</i> " "

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## 1. EQUIPMENT FOR HEARING PROTECTION

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
1.1 All equipment protecting hearing (whether worn in or over the ear)	II	

## 2. EQUIPMENT FOR EYE PROTECTION

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
2.1 All eye protectors and filters	II	
Except:		
2.2 Eye protectors and filters designed and manufactured for use in high-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of 100°C or more and which may or may not be characterised by the presence of infra-red radiation, flames or the projection of large amounts of molten material	III	3.3.4
2.3 Eye protectors and filters designed and manufactured to provide protection against ionising radiation	III	3.3.3
2.4 Eye protectors and filters designed and manufactured to provide protection against electrical risks	III	3.3.7
2.5 Swimming and/or diving goggles and masks	I	3.1.1
2.6 Eye protectors and filters designed and manufactured exclusively to provide protection against sunlight, sun glasses (not corrective) for private and professional use	I	3.1.6
2.7 Ski goggles of all types, except corrective spectacles	I	3.1.6
2.8 Corrective spectacles including corrective sunglasses NB: Where corrective spectacles provide protection other than protection against sunlight (e.g. against impact, abrasive projections, etc.), they are classified as personal protective equipment of the category corresponding to the hazard in question solely in respect of their protective features	0	medical use
2.9 Visors incorporated into helmets designed and manufactured for use with two- or three-wheeled motor vehicles	0	2.5

### 3. EQUIPMENT FOR PROTECTION AGAINST FALLS FROM A HEIGHT

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
<p>3.1 All protective equipment designed and manufactured to provide protection against falls from a height, for private or professional use (working at heights, falling off boats, mountaineering, rock climbing, speleology, etc.) This category also includes equipment for working at a height and with support (harnesses, thigh straps, belts, etc.)</p> <p>NB: This equipment includes harnesses (thigh straps, shoulder belts, etc.) and all accessories intended for attaching a person to a structure, with the exception of anchorage points forming an integral part of the structure or rock-face</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for professional use: lanyards, mobile fall arresters, karabiners, energy absorbers, etc.</li> <li>- for mountaineering, rock climbing, and speleology: connectors (simple ropes), ropes for abseiling (double ropes), slings, climbing karabiners, rope clamps, chocks, pitons, ice pitons, gripping devices for use on artificial climbing walls, etc.</li> </ul>	III	3.3.6
Except:		
3.2 Equipment for accessing or leaving positions at a height (winch seats, descenders not fitted with a built-in speed-regulating system, etc.)	0	they are not PPE
3.3 Equipment for climbing, rock climbing, speleology etc. (ice-axes, hammers, descenders not fitted with a built-in speed-regulating system, rope-climbing equipment, etc.)	0	they are not PPE
3.4 Support equipment (harnesses, etc.) designed and manufactured for use with parachutes, paragliders, hang-gliders, etc. and which cannot be used for purposes other than those for which they were designed.	0	they are not PPE

#### 4. EQUIPMENT FOR HEAD PROTECTION

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
4.1 All helmets, including sports helmets	II	
Except:		
4.2 Helmets designed and manufactured for use in high-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of 100°C or more and which may or may not be characterised by the presence of infra-red radiation, flames or the projection of large amounts of molten material.	III	3.3.4
4.3 Helmets designed and manufactured to provide protection against electrical risks	III	3.3.7
4.4 Light headgear designed and manufactured to provide scalp protection	I	3.1.5
4.5 Helmets designed and manufactured for riders of 2- or 3-wheeled motor vehicles, including racing helmets	0	2.5
4.6 Helmets designed and manufactured specifically for use by the armed forces or in the maintenance of law and order	0	2.1

## 5. EQUIPMENT FOR PART OR WHOLE FACE PROTECTION

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
5.1 All equipment	II	
Except:		
5.2 Equipment designed and manufactured for use in high-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of 100°C or more and which may or may not be characterised by the presence of infra-red radiation, flames or the projection of large amounts of molten material	III	3.3.4
5.3 Equipment designed and manufactured for use in low-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of -50°C or less	III	3.3.5
5.4 Equipment designed and manufactured to provide protection against electrical risks	III	3.3.7
5.5 Visors designed and manufactured for incorporation into helmets used by riders of 2- or 3-wheeled motor vehicles, including racing visors	0	2.5

## 6. PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
6.1 All items of clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide specific protection	II	
Except:		
6.2 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against electrical risks	III	3.3.7
6.3 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured for use in high-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of 100°C or more and which may or may not be characterised by the presence of infra-red radiation, flames or the projection of large amounts of molten material	III	3.3.4
6.4 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured for use in low-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of -50°C or less	III	3.3.5
6.5 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide only limited protection <sup>1</sup> against chemical attack or against ionising radiation	III	3.3.3
6.6 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide complete insulation from the atmosphere	III	equivalent to 3.3.2
6.7 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against weather conditions which are neither exceptional nor extreme, for professional use	I	3.1.4
6.8 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against mechanical action the effects of which are superficial	I	3.1.1

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<sup>1</sup> The manufacturer shall indicate the products against which protection is provided, and the time for which such protection lasts.

<b>TYPE OF PPE</b>	<b>Certification category</b>	<b>Reason</b>
6.9 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against risks arising from handling hot components which do not expose the user to a temperature of over 50°C or to dangerous impacts	I	3.1.3
6.10 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured specifically for use by the armed forces or in the maintenance of law and order, including bulletproof clothing or jackets, clothing protecting against biological contamination or ionising radiation	0	2.1
6.11 Clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against weather conditions which are neither exceptional nor extreme, for private use	0	2.3
6.12 Ordinary clothing and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) or sports clothing and/or accessories (not providing specific protection), including uniforms	0	2.3

## 7. RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
7.1 All respiratory protective equipment designed and manufactured to provide protection against solid aerosols, liquid aerosols or gases <sup>2</sup> ; all respiratory protective equipment designed and manufactured to provide full insulation from the atmosphere; all respiratory protective equipment designed and manufactured for use in diving	III	
Except:		
7.2 All respiratory protective equipment designed and manufactured specifically for use by the armed forces or in the maintenance of law and order	0	2.1
7.3 Surgical masks <sup>3</sup>	0	medical use

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<sup>2</sup> The manufacturer must indicate the principal protective properties of the equipment, as well as the period during which it may be used or an indication allowing the user safely to identify when the effectiveness of the equipment has expired.

<sup>3</sup> Where such masks are intended to protect the wearer against microbial and viral infections, etc. they are in certification category III (personal protection rather than medical use).

## 8. EQUIPMENT FOR LEG AND/OR FOOT AND ANTI-SLIP PROTECTION

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
8.1 All equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured specifically to protect the foot and/or the leg and to provide anti-slip protection	II	
Except:		
8.2 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against electrical risks for work involving dangerous voltages, or used to provide insulation against high voltages	III	3.3.7
8.3 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured for use in high-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of 100°C or more and which may or may not be characterised by the presence of infra-red radiation, flames or the projection of large amounts of molten material	III	3.3.4
8.4 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured for use in low-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of -50°C or less	III	3.3.5
8.5 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide only limited protection <sup>4</sup> against chemical attack or ionising radiation	III	3.3.3
8.6 Sports equipment (in particular sports shoes) and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to protect against external impacts	I	3.1.5

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<sup>4</sup> The manufacturer shall indicate the products against which protection is provided, and the time for which such protection lasts.

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
8.7 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against weather conditions which are neither exceptional nor extreme, for professional use	I	3.1.4
8.8 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against atmospheric conditions, for private use and/or sporting use	0	2.3
8.9 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured specifically for use by the armed forces or in the maintenance of law and order, including equipment protecting against biological contamination or ionising radiation	0	2.1
8.10 Some shoes, in particular sports shoes, contain components intended to absorb shock when walking, running, etc. or to ensure a good grip or stability. <sup>5</sup> These components are to be regarded as being intended to increase comfort	0	they are not PPE

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<sup>5</sup> This category includes in particular football and rugby boots and spiked running shoes.

## 9. EQUIPMENT FOR HAND AND ARM PROTECTION

TYPE OF PPE	Certification category	Reason
9.1 All equipment <sup>6</sup> and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured specifically to protect the arm and/or the hand	II	
Except:		
9.2 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against electrical risks for work involving dangerous voltages, or used to provide insulation against high voltages.	III	3.3.7
9.3 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured for use in high-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of 100°C or more and which may or may not be characterised by the presence of infra-red radiation, flames or the projection of large amounts of molten material, including fire-fighters' equipment.	III	3.3.4
9.4 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured for use in low-temperature environments the effects of which are comparable to those of an air temperature of -50°C or less	III	3.3.5
9.5 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide only limited protection <sup>7</sup> against chemical attack or ionising radiation	III	3.3.3

<sup>6</sup> This includes all garments protecting the hand or part of the hand, including gloves, fingerless gloves, mittens, garments protecting the fingers only or the palm only, etc.

<sup>7</sup> The manufacturer shall indicate the products against which protection is provided and the time for which such protection lasts.

<b>TYPE OF PPE</b>	<b>Certification category</b>	<b>Reason</b>
9.6 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to protect against cleaning materials of weak action (for dishwashing, cleaning etc.), for professional use	I	3.1.2
9.7 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to provide protection against mechanical action the effects of which are superficial (pricks due to sewing, gardening, dirty work, sports, etc.)	I	3.1.1
9.8 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured to protect against heat and risks encountered in the handling of hot components which do not expose the user to a temperature exceeding 50°C or to dangerous impacts and against unexceptional cold weather, for professional use	I	3.1.3 and 3.1.4
9.9 Gloves and finger guards for medical use in the patient's environment	0	medical use
9.10 Gloves designed and manufactured to provide protection against damp, non-extreme heat or cold, for private use	0	2.3
9.11 Equipment and/or accessories (whether or not detachable) designed and manufactured specifically for use by the armed forces or in the maintenance of law and order, including equipment protecting against biological contamination or ionising radiation	0	2.1

**10. EQUIPMENT DESIGNED TO PREVENT DROWNING  
OR FOR USE AS BUOYANCY AIDS**

<b>TYPE OF PPE</b>	<b>Certification category</b>	<b>Reason</b>
10.1 All equipment designed and manufactured to prevent drowning or for use as buoyancy aids, including swimming aids and inflatable buoys which are not regarded as toys (for use exclusively in shallow water <sup>8)</sup>	II	
Except:		
10.2 Life-buoys and life-jackets for emergency use by ship and aircraft passengers <sup>9</sup>	0	2.4

**11. EQUIPMENT FOR PROTECTION AGAINST ELECTRICAL RISKS**

<b>TYPE OF PPE</b>	<b>Certification category</b>	<b>Reason</b>
11.1 For the record: equipment for protection against electrical risks is included in the above tables NB: Dangerous voltages means a voltage equal to or exceeding 50 V alternating current or 75 V direct current	III	3.3.7
Except:		
11.2 Hand-held insulating tools	0	they are not PPE

**8)**

Actually under revision

**9)**

The terms "ship" and "aircraft" refer exclusively to those carrying passengers and to seagoing vessels subject to the international conventions of the IMO.  
Pleasure craft (motor boats and sailing boats), fishing boats, working boats, etc., are not included in this category.