



## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) IN THE THOROUGHBRED BREEDING INDUSTRY (UK)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) plays a critical role in keeping staff, visitors, and horses safe. PPE is designed to provide a barrier between the wearer and workplace hazards that cannot be completely controlled through other measures. In a stud farm environment, PPE helps prevent injuries, illnesses, and exposure to hazardous substances.

### Legal responsibilities – Personal Protective Equipment

Businesses have responsibilities under the Personal Protective Equipment at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2022 (PPER 2022) to provide PPE that is appropriate for the risks involved, fits the user correctly, and is supplied free of charge. They must also ensure PPE meets required safety standards, is properly maintained, stored and replaced when necessary, and that employees receive adequate training and information on correct use.

Employers are also required to provide PPE for self-employed staff who operate under the yard's direction, use the yard's equipment and follow its established routines, e.g., grooms. This does not apply to specialist contractors, e.g., vets, farriers.

Staff are also responsible for using and taking care of PPE in line with their training and manufacturer's instructions and reporting any loss, damage, or defects to their employer.

### Why PPE is important

Working with horses and in breeding facilities carries a variety of risks:

- **Physical injuries:** horse kicks, bites, or accidental collisions; slips, trips, and falls in stables or paddocks; handling machinery or equipment.
- **Chemical exposure:** disinfectants, veterinary medicines, pesticides, or cleaning agents.
- **Biological hazards:** contact with bodily fluids, vermin, or bedding dust.
- **Environmental factors:** cold, wet, or uneven surfaces, extreme temperatures, and outdoor working conditions.

While training, safe handling practices, and environmental controls can reduce risk, PPE provides an additional layer of protection.

## Common types of PPE in breeding operations

1. **Head protection:** Hard hats or helmets when working around or riding horses, or during construction/maintenance tasks.
2. **Hand protection:** Gloves for handling medicines, chemicals, foaling, lunging, or cleaning stables and equipment.
3. **Foot protection:** Steel-toe boots or sturdy footwear to protect against trampling and slips.
4. **Eye and face protection:** Safety goggles when using chemicals or during cleaning.
5. **Protective clothing:** Overalls, aprons, or coveralls to protect against dirt, chemicals, and biological hazards and waterproof clothing for outdoor work or wet conditions.
6. **Respiratory protection:** Masks or respirators when working in dusty environments or using certain chemicals.

## Implementing PPE effectively

- **Selection:** Choose PPE that is suitable for the specific task and properly sized for the wearer.
- **Training:** Staff must be trained in the correct use, removal, cleaning, storage and disposal of PPE.
- **Maintenance:** Inspect PPE regularly for damage or wear, and replace it as needed.
- **Integration with risk assessments:** PPE should be used as part of a wider risk management strategy, complementing safe procedures, COSHH controls, and environmental measures.

## Benefits of PPE

- Reduces the risk of injuries and exposure to harmful substances.
- Protects staff and visitors while working with large animals or hazardous materials.
- Supports compliance with health and safety regulations.
- Enhances confidence and safety culture within the breeding facility.

PPE is not a substitute for safe handling practices, proper training, or hazard control – it is a critical last line of defence in protecting people. By choosing appropriate PPE, using it correctly, and integrating it into broader risk management strategies, stud farms can maintain a safe and healthy workplace for everyone involved.

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