

Personal Protective Equipment

Who Pays for PPE?

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What is the legal requirement when workers must use PPE?

All jurisdictions in Canada have the requirement for workers to use personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE must be in good repair when being used and there are often requirements instructing workplaces on how to store or clean the equipment, especially respirators.

Employers are responsible for making sure that PPE requirements are being followed in the workplace.

However, making sure that workers use PPE during the course of their work does not always mean all employers are required to pay for the PPE used by workers. Even where legislation requires employers to “provide” PPE, that statement does not mean it must be provided without cost to the worker.

The interpretation and wording in each jurisdiction may vary. In some cases where employers are required to provide PPE at no cost, this requirement is often stated that the employer is only responsible for providing the PPE that is determined necessary (e.g., appropriate for the risks associated with the workplace and the work).

In addition, there may be specific situations (such as fall protection or working with asbestos) where other requirements are in effect.

What do the laws state?

The information below is a general summary only. For any information about legislation and the requirement(s) about PPE, and because legislation can change from time to time, always check directly with [your jurisdiction](#) for the exact legal interpretation.

Jurisdictions where legislation specifically states employers are to provide required PPE at no cost to the workers:

- Northwest Territories
- Nunavut
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan

Jurisdictions where guidance is stated or where either party must pay for specified types of PPE:

- Alberta – The employer is required to provide (pay for) respiratory protective equipment to workers when needed. It is not specified if other PPE is paid by the employer or worker.
- British Columbia – The worker is responsible for having clothing to protect against the elements, and general work purposes such as work gloves, appropriate footwear, and a hard hat (safety head gear). The employer must provide (pay for) any other PPE required by workers. Agreements can be made for the employer to also pay for the items listed under the worker’s responsibility.
- Manitoba – The worker is responsible for providing headwear and protective footwear (employer must make sure the PPE is used according to the requirements) but the employer is to provide the worker with equipment (at no cost) appropriate for the risks associated with the workplace and the work, as well as follow provisions for cleaning, storage, repairs, and replacement)
- New Brunswick – Note that a notice is posted on the WorkSafeNB site that it is the position of [WorkSafeNB](#) that deciding who pays for PPE in New Brunswick is "best made by the workplace parties".
- Nova Scotia – Generally it is up to the employer and workers to decide who pays for personal protective equipment and whether it is cost shared. However, the Occupational Safety General Regulations do require the employer to provide or purchase several specific devices including respiratory equipment, personal floatation device, work clothes, and PPE associated with rechargeable storage batteries, energized electrical installations, and confined space entry.
- Yukon – Workers are expected to have the appropriate protective clothing to protect themselves from the natural elements, work gloves and footwear. The employer will provide other PPE and specialty clothing as required.

Jurisdictions that state “provide”, specify use only, or are not specific about who purchases:

- Federal/Canada
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Ontario

- Prince Edward Island
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What does "provide" mean?

There is no legal definition for "provide" in any health and safety legislation across Canada. Instead, the provinces and territories rely on commonly accepted usage and dictionary definitions to determine what 'provide' means when it is used in legislation.

"Provide" therefore does not mean the employer must provide all PPE. The employer may help their workers locate and order the required equipment, or make the equipment available for purchase (through the employer).

Often employers will choose to pay for some or all of the personal protective equipment.

Who pays for PPE may be an issue that is determined through employment or union contracts. These agreements may outline who is responsible for paying for PPE or how much is covered by the employer or worker.

Note, however, that even if the worker purchases the equipment, the employer must still ensure the equipment is the correct type, in safe working condition, and used appropriately.

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