



## Ground Operations

28<sup>th</sup> November 2025

ASGrOps\_OSI\_042

Version 4.0

# Operational Safety Instruction Use of Personal Protective Equipment Airside

It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant OSIs are brought to the attention of their staff. However, individuals remain responsible for their own actions and those who are in any doubt should consult their Supervisor or Manager.

### 1. Introduction

**1.1** The airside environment presents various hazards to colleagues and visitors, including exposure to loud noise, jet blast, working at height, and risks associated with manual handling. While the provision of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) forms part of a safe system of work, PPE should be considered as the final layer of protection within the hierarchy of control measures. Comprehensive risk assessments must be undertaken to identify and implement adequate controls, including, but not limited to, the use of PPE.

**1.2** Further information on the legal and training requirements can be found in the UK PPE regulations which are available on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website or via the link below:

[The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 \(As amended\)](#)

**1.3** This Operational Safety Instruction (OSI) outlines the requirements for using PPE **in all external airside areas and within the baggage operational areas**. All Team Heathrow colleagues and visitors must fully comply with this OSI. It is also the responsibility of an escort to ensure that all visitors are provided with appropriate PPE during their visit.

**1.4** This OSI has been fully reviewed and amended. Therefore, due to the number of changes, no red bars are shown to indicate where changes have been made.

**1.5** The older version of this OSI "ASGrOps\_OSI\_042 Use of Personal Protective Equipment Airside (Version 3.4)" is hereby cancelled.

**1.6** All current OSIs can be found via the link here or via the Quick-response (QR) code below.



## 2. Definitions

Abbreviation	Description
AFRS	Airport Fire and Rescue Service
AOL	Airside Operations Licence
AOT	Airside Occurrence Ticket
BS EN	British Standard European Norm
CE	Conformité Européenne (which means EC)
EC	European Conformity
EU	European Union
GOL	Ground Operations Licence
GSE	Ground Support Equipment
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HV	High Visibility
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
UKBF	United Kingdom Border Force
UKCA	United Kingdom Conformity Assessment
ULD	Unit Load Device
VIP	Very Important Person

**2.1** For the purpose of this OSI, the terms should have the following meanings:

- 2.1.1** 'Apron' is the defined area on an aerodrome provided for the stationing of aircraft for the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers, the loading and unloading of cargo, mail, fuelling, parking or maintenance.
- 2.1.2** 'Manoeuvring Area' is the part of an aerodrome provided for the take-off and landing of aircraft and for the movement of aircraft on the surface, excluding the apron and any part of the aerodrome provided for the maintenance of aircraft.



### 3. Employer Responsibilities (Actions for Employers)

- 3.1** Under [the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#), employers are legally required to carry out risk assessments to identify potential hazards and implement appropriate control measures to safeguard the health and safety of employees and others affected by their work. PPE should be considered as the last form of protection considered to control the risk.
- 3.2** Under [the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 \(As amended\)](#), employers are responsible for the selection, provision, standards, use, maintenance and storage of PPE. They are also responsible for enforcing and monitoring the proper use of PPE.
- 3.3** The minimum requirement for using PPE is set out within this OSI. However, task-based risk assessments will identify any additional items of PPE appropriate to the task, and these must be worn in accordance with the employers/companies' risk assessments.
- 3.4** Where a risk is identified through a risk assessment, employers must provide all necessary PPE to their employees to meet the requirements of this OSI, free of charge.
- 3.5** PPE should be issued on a personal basis, but may be shared by workers (for example, where it is only required for limited periods). When shared, employers should ensure that such equipment is properly cleaned and, where required, sanitised to ensure that there are no health risks to the next person using it.
- 3.6** All PPE must be appropriately sized to ensure it can be fully fastened, is comfortable, considerate and does not pose any hazards to employees, such as being caught in machinery.
- 3.7** Guidance material is available on the HSE website or follows the link below:
- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) at Work](#)
- 3.8** Employers must consult with their employees and examine the tasks to be undertaken to choose the most suitable PPE. Considerations should include inclusivity, weather condition, gender and etc.
- 3.9** When different forms of PPE (e.g., head, hearing, and/or eye protection) are to be worn together, they must be compatible so that the wearing of one does not compromise the protection afforded by the other. If this cannot be achieved, priority should be given to mandatory PPE over recommended PPE.



- 3.10** All PPE issued to employees must be marked with the appropriate “CE” or “UKCA” markings.



CE Mark



UKCA Mark

- 3.11** Employers must ensure that suitable PPE is available for replacement. They are also responsible for ensuring these stocks are maintained to ensure the PPE is maintaining a good level of protection to their employees.
- 3.12** Employers must ensure that all PPE continues to provide the correct level of protection to the employees throughout their employment.
- 3.13** Employers must ensure that appropriate accommodation is provided for PPE while it is not in use.

#### 4. Employee's Responsibilities (Actions for Employees)

- 4.1** Employees have a responsibility by law for using and wearing PPE that is provided to them by their employers as instructed.
- 4.2** Employees must ensure that their PPE is clean and in good working order. Otherwise, they must inform their employer for a replacement.
- 4.3** If in doubt, employees must consult their employer for the provision of PPE required for their job duties.
- 4.4** Employees must wear their own company-issued uniform whenever it is provided except in the cases of exceptional medical circumstances and only with the approval from their employers.

#### 5. Workplace Clothing

At Heathrow, we recognise and respect our diverse community. However, to ensure safety and to prevent the risk of clothing being caught or trapped by moving machinery parts, the following **must be strictly followed at all times** while working in external airside areas and within the baggage operational areas:

- 5.1** **No neck scarf is permitted airside, including but not limited to: Control Posts, operational stands and baggage operations areas etc.** to prevent being entangled by any moving machinery or equipment.



- 5.2 Religious clothing such as headscarves and turbans are permitted but must be properly secured.
- 5.3 All loose items, for example ties or necklaces, must be secured in a manner that they do not pose a safety risk or cause personnel to become entangled in machinery or equipment.
- 5.4 No loose or over-sized clothing is permitted. This includes items such as hoodies, loose sweaters, and long dresses or any other religious clothing (such as thobes) that are not closely fitted. Examples as below:



Example of Hoodie

- 5.5 All raincoats used airside must be fitted with detachable hoods featuring a quick-release mechanism.
- 5.6 All lanyards worn must be equipped with a quick-detach mechanism to ensure they can be quickly removed if caught by machinery, thereby preventing injury. It is strongly recommended that three-point break lanyards or arm band holders are to be used.
- 5.7 All hair that extends beyond shoulder length must be securely tied back at or above the shoulder.
- 5.8 To reduce the risk of entanglement, individuals with facial hair that extends below the chin must ensure it is securely restrained when working on the apron.

## 6. High Visibility (HV) Clothing

- 6.1 To ensure colleagues are clearly visible from all angles in an operational environment, it is mandatory for all colleagues operating in external airside areas and baggage operational areas to wear HV clothing on their upper body at all times, including flight crew when performing an aircraft walkaround check on the apron. All HV clothing must be the outermost garment and **must be secured and fully fastened** at all times.



- 6.2** All HV protective clothing **must be of a zip type (i.e. no Velcro type permitted)** and must conform to the specifications within BS EN ISO 20471:2013 Class 2 fluorescent background and Class 2 HV reflective tape as a minimum.



Long sleeved HV



HV Vest

- 6.3** Notwithstanding the above, it is recommended that all HV clothing used conform to BS EN ISO 20471:2013 Class 3 standard whenever possible. More information can be found at this [link](#).
- 6.4** All HV clothing must be of a colour that enables the wearer to stand out clearly against the ambient background of the working environment. These colours are required to be **fluorescent yellow for operational colleagues** (e.g. ramp agents and work site colleagues etc) and **orange for supervisory positions** (e.g. ramp supervisor, ramp team leader and work site manager etc) with their role title such as “Ramp Supervisor” or “Coordinator” printed on the front/back.
- 6.5** Only company issued outer HV clothing can be worn with the company’s name and logo displayed, as specified by the AOL or GOL. The company name and logo must be easily identifiable from 10m away.
- 6.6** Due to the nature of their roles, for example marshalling an aircraft and response to emergency, Heathrow airside operational colleagues need to be recognisable from a distance and therefore they will wear a garment comprising of a fluorescent yellow and orange colour HV clothing. No Team Heathrow colleagues are permitted to wear this colour design of HV clothing.
- 6.7** Heathrow recommends colleagues to wear HV trousers on the apron. It is best practice for HV trousers to be the same colour as the tabard/jacket.
- 6.8** All colleagues engaged in tasks that involve working beneath vehicles or machinery, such as maintenance, repairs, or in any situation where their upper body HV clothing may be obscured, **must wear HV trousers**.
- 6.9** It is recommended that colleagues wear a HV garment whilst inside a vehicle airside.





## 7. Foot Protection

**7.1** Certain airside activities may present a significant risk of foot injury. For example, foot injury caused by items dropping from height or through slipping/falling. All colleagues working in the areas below must always wear protective footwear that includes impact protection, anti-slip properties and comply with BS EN ISO 20345:2022 as a minimum:

- All external airside areas. For example, manoeuvring and apron areas.
- Baggage operational areas, including the safety walking route.
- Where a risk assessment has identified protective footwear as a requirement.

**7.2** Any colleagues or pedestrians using designated safe walking routes - including temporary intended walking route set up for passenger transit on the apron - and crossings, are not required to wear safety footwear in airside areas. However, they must always stay on the designated safe walking routes.

## 8. Hearing Protection

**8.1** It is recommended that hearing protection complies with BS EN 352-1:2020 for earmuffs and BS EN 352-2:2020 for earplugs.



Earmuffs



Corded ear plugs

**8.2** Noise in the airside environment is typically produced by aircraft engines, vehicles, equipment, baggage systems, and terminal infrastructures. Hearing damage is cumulative and may eventually lead to temporary or permanent noise-induced hearing loss.

**8.3** Each employer must determine the standards and level of employee noise exposure, along with appropriate control measures, through their risk assessment.

**8.4** Employers must follow the requirements of [The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005](#) which covers the evaluation and control of noise at work and other aspects.

**8.5** Colleagues must carry hearing protection when working on operational aircraft stands and wear it as required by individual company's risk assessment. In some cases, this is at all times, irrespective of ambient noise levels.

**8.6** Hearing protection must be worn in designated hearing protection zones as indicated by signage within the baggage operational areas (for example the link bridge between Terminals 1 and 2) and within the ULD stillage areas.



- 8.7** Any use of audio devices, including headphones, earphones (e.g. AirPods), or bone-conduction devices, is not recognised as a form of hearing protection. To prevent distractions, these devices are prohibited while working airside.
- 8.8** Whilst performing specific job duties, the use of headsets is only allowed if it is essential and approved by their employer as determined through a risk assessment.

## 9. Head Protection

- 9.1** To minimise head injury, Heathrow strongly recommends the use of bump caps for any aircraft turnaround, aircraft servicing activities or within any airside environment where colleagues are exposed to the risk of impact to the head due to low, confined space or height-restricted clearances. For example, working inside the cargo hold, under the aircraft fuselage or within ULD stillages.
- 9.2** Within the baggage operational areas, bump caps must be worn in designated head protection zones as indicated by signage (for example designated Level 2 and above baggage safety zones).
- 9.3** It is recommended to use BS EN 812:2012 as a minimum standard for bump caps, which is designed to protect against bumps/scrapes with fixed objects.

## 10. Hand and Eye Protection

- 10.1** Certain airside tasks may require the use of hand or eye protection where a risk assessment identifies it as a control measure such as aircraft loading/unloading, working in baggage operational areas, operating GSE, and working in confined spaces.
- 10.2** It is mandatory to wear protective gloves while working in ULD stillage areas.
- 10.3** It is strongly recommended to wear gloves when undertaking manual handling duties on the ramp, including but not limited to loading and unloading baggage and/or cargo. The level of hand protection should be determined by individual's company risk assessment.
- 10.4** It is strongly recommended to wear eye protection PPE in all airside activities when there is a greater risk of eye contamination, for example: dust, substances or chemicals.

## 11. Specialist Protection

- 11.1** For tasks that may affect colleagues' respiratory health or involve working at height and entry into confined spaces, the employer must provide specialised PPE, which is outside the scope of this OSI. These requirements must be included in the individual company's risk assessment.





## 12. Exemptions

- 12.1** When overseen by a colleague/third party, flight and cabin crews are exempt from wearing HV clothing and safety shoes when transiting between the crew bus and the aircraft step or between the control post/terminal building and the crew bus.
- 12.2** In accordance with Paragraph 6.1 of this OSI, flight crews **are required** to wear HV clothing when conducting aircraft workarounds checks on the apron. However, they are not required to wear safety footwear during these checks only.
- 12.3** Due to the nature of their work, the Police are exempt from wearing HV clothing only during operational duties.

## 13. Enforcement

- 13.1** Heathrow will enforce the requirements of wearing PPE as detailed in this OSI. An AOT will be issued as a result of non-compliance. For further information regarding AOT operations, reference should be made to OSI "ASDRVE\_OSI\_087 Management of Airside Safety Offences".
- 13.2** Any refusal to comply with the requirements of this OSI will result in immediate escalation to the individual's employer. In some cases, the individual's Airside ID Pass may be confiscated by Heathrow.

## 14. Enquiries

- 14.1** Any enquiries regarding this OSI should be directed to [airside@heathrow.com](mailto:airside@heathrow.com).

## 15. References

- 15.1** BS EN ISO 20471:2013 High Visibility Clothing.
- 15.2** BS EN ISO 20345:2022 Safety Footwear.
- 15.3** BS EN 912:2012 Industrial Bump Caps.
- 15.4** BS EN 352-1:2020 Part 1 Earmuffs.
- 15.5** BS EN 352-2:2020 Part 2 Earplugs EU Hearing Directive 2003/10/EC Exposure to Noise.
- 15.6** ASDRVE\_OSI\_087 Management of Airside Safety Offences.
- 15.7** HSE: The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (As amended).
- 15.8** Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 15.9** The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.
- 15.10** Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work.



## Document History

Revision	Description of Change	Date
V3.4	Content and grammar change	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
V4.0	Full review of the document to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updates on legislation references.</li><li>• Updates on HV clothing, foot protection and PPE standards.</li><li>• Recommendation of using head and eye protection.</li><li>• Updates on exemptions.</li><li>• New requirements for workplace clothing.</li></ul>	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2025

