

ECB Policy for Personal Protective Equipment in Professional Training Environments

Introduction

1. The aim of this Policy is to mandate the use of certain personal protective equipment by professional players and their support staff when operating in a training and coaching environment in order to enhance the safety of the relevant individuals involved.
2. In this Policy:

Effective Date means 26th January 2026.

Genital Protector means a device (also known as a box) which is designed to protect the groin area, and which complies with British Standard 6183 2:2000;

Head Protectors means the complete assembly of a helmet, faceguard and neck protector, and which complies with British Standards 7928:2013 +A1:2019 and A1:2019. Helmet indicates headwear primarily intended to protect a cricketer's head and neck protector indicates an attachment to the helmet (or an integrated part of the helmet) that covers the part of the head and neck typically below a helmet, behind the ears. In the context of wicket-keepers, Head Protectors means either a helmet and faceguard or a facemask (and in either case which comply with the most recent British Standards; the latest BSI Standard specification for facemasks is BS7928-2:2009);

Professional County Club means any of the clubs and/or companies from time to time listed in Schedule A to the ECB's articles of association and/or any county cricket club from time to time playing in the County Championship and/or the Tier 1 Competitions and/or the Tier 2 Competitions;

PPE means Head Protectors and, in the case of any individual whose sex is male (regardless of gender), Genital Protectors;

Tier 1 Competitions means any women's domestic cricket competitions designated by the ECB as being a "Tier 1" competition, which, as at the Effective Date, includes the T20 Blast Women's Competition and the One Day Cup Women's Competition; and

Tier 2 Competitions means any women's domestic cricket competitions designated by the ECB as being a "Tier 2" competition, which, as at the Effective Date, includes the T20 Blast Women's League 2 and the One Day Cup Women's League 2.

Why is Protective Equipment important?

4. Whilst cricket is not technically a contact sport, there are numerous scenarios whereby players can face significant risks of being hit/hurt by balls, equipment or occasionally other players. The cricket ball is extremely hard and weighs between 140-166 grams. The ball can routinely travel at speeds of over 75mph when bowled or over 85mph when struck by a bat. ECB research shows that a ball strike can produce huge forces that can easily cause skull fracture. Head injury is the most common cause of death in cricket with the number of serious facial injuries also being

well recognised.

5. With the advent of the T20 format, aggressive ball striking has seen an increased documentation of significant injuries to players and support staff in the training and coaching environment, particularly the nets. In recent years, two serious facial fractures occurred to ECB staff (whilst supporting training) that required surgery and there were three serious injuries to Professional County Club coaches at the beginning of the 2019 season. In addition, a wide number of injuries have been documented in both recreational and international cricket which have highlighted the increased risk and potential severity of injury. Three injuries to players and support staff during the ICC 2019 World Cup, including a skull fracture, and a further skull fracture in 2020, reinforced this evidence. The 2020 season saw the nets environments being operated under specific COVID guidelines, which required the use of PPE. This saw a marked reduction in head injuries, further supporting the need for this Policy. Since then with increased awareness, risk assessment and the use of PPE, there has been an ongoing reduction in reported serious injuries. Monitoring of injuries, close shaves and compliance is ongoing.
6. It should be noted that injuries in training do not only occur from direct ball strikes, but also ricochets and accidents meaning that the potential for injuries is significant. It is also clear that injuries to batters have been reduced by the introduction by the ECB of the mandatory use of helmets in matches and improved BSI standards for helmets and faceguards.

Who is covered by this Policy?

7. From the Effective Date, any players or support staff employed or engaged by or providing services to the ECB, a Professional County Club or a team participating in The Hundred (each, a **Relevant Organisation**) must use PPE in the training and coaching environments described in this Policy. From an ECB perspective, this includes all England senior and age group teams and any ECB programmes or performance pathways.
8. This Policy applies no matter where the relevant individuals covered by this Policy may be. Therefore, this Policy applies in full on any overseas tour by an England team, Professional County Club or Hundred Team, in addition to within England and Wales. Use of the necessary PPE must be enforced by the lead or head coach and tour manager (or equivalent) at the relevant training when overseas.
9. This Policy does not deal with the mandatory use of helmets and Head Protectors during a match, as this is dealt with in the ECB Head Protector Regulations; instead, it focuses on the safety needs of players and support staff in the training and coaching environment.
10. This Policy does not apply to any other organisations or individuals outside of the Relevant Organisations. However, the ECB strongly recommends that the guidance in this Policy is adopted by others in the wider cricket community in line with the ECB's education and guidance programme the "Safe Net Code".

Use of PPE

11. Any player representing a Relevant Organisation, or any member of the support staff

of one of the Relevant Organisations, must wear PPE when carrying out certain activities in training and coaching environments, as further set out at paragraphs 15 to 16 below.

12. In each case, the PPE worn must have the appropriate level of British Standards Institution approval for the activity in question.
13. Each Relevant Organisation (and/or relevant training venue, in the case of the ECB) must ensure that the necessary PPE is available for all players and support staff to use and that the use thereof is enforced by the lead or head coach and an appointed officer at the relevant training.
14. The ECB recommends that other protective equipment such as chest guards, pads, gloves, shin pads and thigh guards are also used in the training and coaching environments set out at paragraph 15 below.

Training and Coaching Environment

15. PPE must be worn by players and support staff carrying out any of the activities described in paragraph 16 below in any training or coaching session, whether indoors or outdoors, and whether taking place in nets, at the middle or in a practise match environment where:
 - a. the individuals participating are aged 16 or above; and/or
 - b. a coach has identified a particular risk arising from a batter aged under 16 participating in expansive/power hitting (which is sometimes referred to as “White Ball Practice” but expansive/power hitting may also form part of red ball training); and/or
 - c. an individual has a specific medical condition that impairs their ability to avoid injury (including conditions that affect mobility, judgement, reaction capability and vision).
16. PPE must be worn in the training and coaching environments described in paragraph 15 above when the following activities are being carried out by a player or member of support staff:
 - a. Batting against all types of bowling and during any batting drills where a hard ball is used.
 - b. Wicket-keeping when standing up to the wicket. *N.B. neck protectors are only required when wicket-keeping if the individual undertaking the activity is not sufficiently experienced and/or trained as a professional wicket-keeper.*
 - c. Undertaking throwdowns or batting drills closer than the distance between the batter and the stumps at the non-striker’s end (unless using an A-frame or equivalent to step behind) for any batting practice without restriction on the direction and intensity of the batting.
 - d. Operating a bowling machine without using the full in-built protective screening offered by the machine.
 - e. Practicing hitting the ball over the boundary ropes (referred to as range

hitting).

- f. Catching balls bowled by fast bowlers (known as “mitting”) when not sufficiently experienced and/or trained (e.g. level 3 or 4 coach or equivalent).
 - g. Fielding in a position closer than 8 yards from the batter’s position on the popping crease on a middle stump line, with the exception of any fielding position behind square of the wicket on the offside or the legside that is less than an angle of 45 degrees, such angle being measured from an extended middle stump line behind the wicket to square of the wicket.
 - h. Standing in the position of an umpire with normal proximity to the stumps.
17. The ECB is aware that bowlers in particular are at risk during expansive/power hitting and therefore this activity must be risk assessed to determine the risk of harm to bowlers. The use of throwdowns from behind an A-frame or the use of suitably protected bowling machines must be considered as safety control measures to reduce the risk of injury to bowlers during expansive/power hitting.

Responsibilities

18. The ECB will ensure that this Policy is brought to the attention of all Professional County Clubs and Hundred teams, and that such organisations are aware that any recorded incidents and near misses (as outlined below) must be reported to the ECB.
19. Professional County Clubs and Hundred teams must ensure that:
- a. This Policy is brought to the attention of all players and support staff most likely to be captured within it.
 - b. All training and coaching environments used by their staff will be appropriately risk assessed as per the methodology outlined in the ‘Safe Net Code’.
 - c. Appropriate PPE for use by their staff is supplied and maintained.
 - d. They record any incidents and near misses, with those resulting in serious injury (or having the potential to result in serious injury in the case of near misses) reported to the ECB as soon as possible, and all other incidents and near misses reported to the ECB upon request.

References

Health and Safety Executive: Workers Safety:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/workers/index.htm>

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2966/contents/made>

ECB Head Protector Regulations:

<https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies/regulations/professional-county-cricket>

ICC Minimum Standards (BSI) for Head Protection:

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/about/cricket/rules-and-regulations/helmets>

Facial and Head injuries in Batters:

<https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/47/10/644.info>