BSiF
BRITISH SAFETY INDUSTRY FEDERATION

Guidance for Buyers of PPE – Logos & Alterations

Increasingly customers are requiring corporate, partnership and joint-venture logos to be applied to their PPE garments.

There are significant potential impacts to the performance and conformity of the garments, depending on the specific garment and the type and size of logo being applied.

Similarly alterations or repairs to garments, and the ways in which garments are worn by employees, all have potential to impact the product performance.

This guide has been put together by members of BSIF to help guide you through the key things you need to know - from what to ask your supplier and how to check compliance, through to what to do, and who to ask, if you are unsure.

What Can or Cannot be Done?

As part of the certification process, the manufacturer of the goods will have to provide a full technical file of supporting information and component certificates, as well as supplying physical samples, to the Notified or Approved Body completing the certification. Anything that deviates from the original test reports and physical sample used for the certification process has the possibility to detract from the performance levels stated. This is why a Declaration of Conformity must be supplied by the manufacturer (not distributor) of the goods, either as a URL or physical paper declaration, as well as the User Information Sheets which provide guidance on the appropriate use, care and maintenance of the item to ensure it performs as required.

So what impact does this have in practice when adding a logo to a garment? There are key considerations for logos which Buyers should be aware of before asking for them to be applied:

Type of Logo – logos can be embroidered, heat applied / transferred, screen printed, sew on badges or logos made from reflective or photoluminescent materials. The type of fabric and garment performance will impact on your logo choice. For example, embroidering an EN343 certificated foul weather jacket will significantly damage the waterproof fabric so the jacket is likely to leak.

Size of Logo – particularly with EN ISO 20471 high-visibility certificated products, the size of logo is critical to the garment compliance. The EN ISO 20471 standard requires minimum visible area of fluorescent fabric as well as minimum reflective tape, applied in specific configurations. Depending on the amount of visible fluorescent fabric, the size of the logo may impact the classification of the item as it will cover up an amount of fabric.

EN20471 Requirements	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Reflective Tape	0.10 sqm	0.13 sqm	0.20 sqm
Fluorescent Material	0.14 sqm	0.50 sqm	0.80 sqm

The smallest size garment is always tested under the certificate to ensure compliance to these minimums, and as each garment will differ it is best to speak to your supplier for guidance on the maximum logo size. In some cases, you may need to use different sizes of logos on the smallest sizes compared to the larger sizes – be especially aware of how many logos you are requesting. For example, a small logo on the chest is unlikely to impact the overall standard but combined with a larger logo on the back, and another on the sleeve, the chances are you will be detracting from the classification.

Specific Testing Requirements – there are likely to be specific testing requirements for the application of certain types of logos. In particular, in reference to any garment certificated to a flame retardant, welding, anti-static and / or electric arc standard.

- If a logo is under 10cm squared then it may not need to be tested – this could apply to a small front logo.
- If a logo is 10cm squared or larger, then it would definitely need to be tested (limited flame spread test) – this would apply for example to larger back logos.

Some very thin heat applied logos may pass the limited flame spread test, despite not being FR logos, as there isn't much volume to ignite. If the logo is thicker, then non-FR logos normally do NOT pass and you would have to use FR logos.

If the logo was FR and the logo material had been tested on the specific FR fabric, then the Approved Body or Notified Body would accept this to include within the certification of the garment. If the logo was FR and hadn't been tested on the specific FR fabric, then it would still need to be tested to be included within the certification.

BSIF would recommend only using FR logos for application to any garment certificated to any heat & flame standard.

Other Potential Processes that Impact Performance

Repair & Alterations Services - Where garments are being altered or repaired by a laundry service provider, it is imperative that factory original components are used.

For example, if a trouser certificated to EN ISO 11611 (welding) and EN ISO 11612 (heat & flame) is repaired with a standard poly-cotton fabric then the entire garment performance is compromised and the wearer is no longer protected in line with the garment certificate.

Not only are there serious health & safety implications for this, but as an employer, there may be further liabilities under the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations (1992) as PPE has not been maintained properly.

Washing & Drying – the User Information Sheet, along with the relevant conformity mark (CE, UKCA, UKNI) label in the garment, provide clear instructions on the use, care and maintenance of each item of PPE. Following this is key to ensuring the garment is compliant for it's appropriate life-cycle.

For example, if reflective tape is washed or dried at excessive temperatures, then the glass beads can come away from the silver backing of the reflective tape.

This may not be clearly visible during daylight, but will mean the essential reflective properties of the tape will not be present in darker environments, when light needs to be reflected from the glass beads in order to make the wearer visible.

What to ask your Supplier & Checking Compliance

Your supplier(s) should be able to provide guidance and support to ensure that anything they do to an item of PPE does not impact its integrity. This includes confirming maximum logo sizes and recommending the most appropriate type of logo for the specific garment. They are also responsible for ensuring the on-going conformity of the garment to the specified performance levels contained within the EC-Type certificate.

Examples of evidence you may consider requesting / checking as part of your own due diligence include:

- Evidence of retesting FR logos on the garment / fabric
- Providing copies of User Information Sheets & Declarations of Conformity before asking you to purchase
- Checking the care label contains the relevant conformity mark (CE, UKCA, UKNI) & that each performance / standard claimed is clearly shown on the label
- Cross-checking to ensure that the UKCA or EC-Type Certificate & Declaration of Conformity match

An increasing quantity of non-approved and non-certificated products are being sold into the UK - these products just do not perform as they should, putting lives at risk and again exposing the user to prosecution.
To help combat this, the BSIF has created the Registered Safety Supplier scheme (RSSS) . Companies displaying the scheme's logo have signed a binding declaration that the safety equipment they offer meets the appropriate standards, fully complies with the PPE regulations and carries the relevant conformity mark (CE, UKCA, UKNI).

Who to ask if you are unsure?

Your supplier should be able to help you in the first instance, but if you remain unsure, there are a number of resources available to you.

The BSIF website contains a large amount of useful reference documents as well as offering the full list of Registered Safety Supplier scheme (RSSS) members. These members can help, either in providing advice (and have under-gone training to ensure they are able to do so safely) or supplying products.

Top 5 PPE Tips

Here are our top 5 tips to ensure that employees' PPE remains fit for purpose, is able to perform to the required standards, and does not inadvertently cause additional hazards:

1. ***Find the Right Fit*** – always ensure your PPE is correctly fitted, ill-fitting PPE can be the cause of discomfort as well as increasing potential for trips and falls. This is especially important with FR garments as a tight-fitting garment can reduce the protection factor as the air gap aids insulation.
2. ***Wear it Right*** – wearer guidelines are in place to protect the you and not following these guidelines can detract from or reduce the performance. For example, keeping the reflective strips in a continuous band around your body for jackets and other front fastening items is an essential part of achieving the high visibility standard. Please note: rolling up your sleeves or tucking trouser legs into boots will also detract from the standard and may render the garment non-compliant.
3. ***Keep it Clean*** – ingrained dirt and discolouration can reduce the protection of high-visibility garments, whilst oils and grease on flame retardant garments could ignite and cause serious harm to the wearer.
4. ***Check for Damage and Defects*** – items are design to offer specific protection and any damage or defect could also impair the level of protection you need, or could become a snag hazard.
5. ***Rotate your PPE*** – maximise the life and protection level of your PPE by rotating garments regularly to avoid over wearing and washing of one particular set. This can only be achieved with appropriate garment allocations.

FAQ

Q: What is the maximum size logo I can ask for?

A: This will depend on the specific garment(s) and the size of garment. Your supplier should be able to advise you on this.

Q: Do I need to use FR logos on FR garments?

A: We would always recommend that you do. Your supplier will be able to provide this.

Q: Can we allow our staff to make their own alterations such as shortening a leg or sleeve length?

A: We would advise getting a specialist supplier to do this, as there are some specific requirements you need to take into account to ensure the garment continues to meet the required standards. For example, the reflective tape must still be a minimum of 5cm from the edge of the hem / cuff and the total amount of fluorescent fabric may be impacted.

For further information please contact BSIF:

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