

WHAT DOES CE MARKING MEAN?

CE is a European safety mark – it means products with the CE mark have been tested to a minimum standard. Having a CE mark is often required for Personal Protective Equipment as it indicates that a garment meets minimum standards for High-Visibility or that boots have a minimum standard of protective cap etc.



EN 347 – High Visibility Warning Clothing For Professional Use

EN471 is the European safety standard that deals with high visibility clothing. Hi-Vis clothing should be worn to alert people when someone is working in a potentially hazardous environment, such as in bad weather or along the road side. There are 3 classes of protection depending on the perceived danger or threat of accident. For example, high speed traffic will take longer to stop so the more visible you are, the quicker the vehicle can start to brake and reduce the risk of accident or injury.

Employers must ensure they provide suitable Hi-Vis clothing that meets the minimum safety standards. Employees should also take responsibility for their own safety, including taking proper care of issued garments.

	SUITABLE FOR	REQUIREMENTS
CLASS 1 - Minimum visibility level	Off road i.e. transport depots	Waistcoats, tabards and overalls without sleeves can be worn. Should have ONE band of reflective tape around the body
CLASS 2 – Intermediate visibility level	Roadsides where speed is less than 40 miles per hour	Waistcoats, tabards and overalls without sleeves can be worn. Should have TWO bands of reflective tape around the body, or ONE 5cm band around the body and ONE band over each shoulder.
CLASS 3 – Highest visibility level	All roads where the speed exceeds 40 mile per hour & airport runways etc	Garments must have sleeves – coats, jackets and overalls can be worn. Ideally trousers should have two reflective bands around the leg (if your jacket is size small or XS you must also wear Hi-Vis trousers as there is not enough total reflective banding on the jackets alone to meet the safety requirements). Should have TWO bands of reflective tape around the body, TWO bands on the arms and ONE band over each shoulder. Hi-Vis trousers should have TWO bands of reflective tape around each leg.

How to check for safety standards

If a garment has been certified to European safety standards it will have an EN471 label, and the CE mark. The label will also identify which class (1, 2 or 3) the garment has been certified to. Some garments may have an American safety rating (ANSI), but these cannot be worn as PPE in the UK unless they have also undergone the European tests and have been given a CE mark.

When buying Hi-Vis garments for PPE, once you have checked for the EN471 and CE mark, you should also check that the garments meets any other requirements you might have such as waterproof or water-resistant. It is also important that you get the right size –if they are going to be worn over your uniform and other kit or armour, make sure you are wearing them when you try on your Hi-Vis garments.

Whilst dirt can diminish the effect of a Hi-Vis garment, so can repeated washing. It is essential that the washing care instructions on each garment are followed to make sure that the fabric and reflective strips stay in the best condition.

Many Hi-Vis garments will also have a CE mark for foul weather protection so look out for garments certified to EN343 standards.

EN343 – Foul Weather Protection

Resistance to water penetration and water vapour resistance (breathability) are the two main properties which are tested in the EN 343.

	RESISTANCE TO WATER PENETRATION	BREATHABILITY
CLASS 1	Provides the lowest level of foul weather protection	Not classified as breathable
CLASS 2	Provides an intermediate foul weather protection	Provides an intermediate level of breathability
CLASS 3	Provides the highest level of foul weather protection	Provides the highest level of breathability