

What is PPE?

Hi-viz clothing is defined as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – a product that offers some protection or is safety-related. PPE is divided into categories according to risk factors. While something like an electric kettle falls into Category I, riding hats and body protectors are in Category II. In April 2009, hi-viz clothing was reclassified and moved from Category I to II, requiring manufacturers to submit their garments to an approved organisation for testing to ensure they reach the appropriate standard. Only once this has been done can a CE mark be placed on the product, showing that it conforms to the European directive for all Personal Protective Equipment.



BETA High Visibility Certification Scheme Members



Does horse hi-viz gear such as exercise sheets and harnesses need certification?

No, the Personal Protective Equipment directive applies only to garments for people, not horses.

What about garments that have the appearance of hi-viz yet don't actually claim to be?

Any garment that is designed to look like hi-viz and gives the impression that it acts in the same way should meet the relevant standard.

A full list of member companies, along with the garments included in the scheme, is available from BETA.

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BETA Guide to Rider Hi-Viz

BETA acts on hi-viz

Hi-viz gear plays a key role in rider safety, ensuring that the wearer is clearly seen by motorists and other road users. It couldn't be more simple, but buying high-visibility garments and accessories that are effective and up to standard is sometimes not that easy.



Many riders are thoroughly confused, particularly when confronted with products that appear to be hi-viz yet carry no certification. Then there are those that do meet a standard but people are unsure of what it means.

Members of the equestrian industry were so concerned about the lack of clarity and the number of uncertified garments being offered to consumers that they approached BETA with a view to setting up a BETA-branded certification mark.

After extensive collaboration between BETA and hi-viz specialists, the BETA High Visibility Certification Scheme was launched, helping riders to buy with knowledge and confidence because BETA carries out all the checks on their behalf.



Colour-coded scheme

Only garments certified to a recognised standard are included and awarded one of three colour-coded BETA hi-viz certification marks. They will then be monitored and checked annually to ensure they remain compliant.

The certification mark assures riders that garments and accessories conform to one of the three high-visibility standards for equestrian clothing. Those included in the scheme can be identified by the colour coded sewn-in labels, swing tags or stickers.



EN471 (2003) and EN20471 (2013) are represented by an aqua-coloured label. This is suitable for professional use, such as by grooms exercising horses out on the roads.



EN1150 is represented by a royal-blue label. This is suitable for non-professional use by leisure riders.



EN13356 is represented by a navy-blue label. This is suitable for hi-viz accessories, including detachable belts, arm and hat bands.



Questions answered

Is the BETA scheme compulsory for all hi-viz companies and their products?

No – the decision on whether to join is down to individual companies. However, several have already signed up because they want to help riders to understand complicated and confusing certification that, in turn, will ensure that riders are able to make an informed choice when buying hi-viz products.

Why do we need standards?

They give a guarantee that garments will do exactly what the manufacturer says they will do. With hi-viz, this means that garments are reasonably durable and will not fade or lose their reflectivity after washing or a short period of use. Colour and luminance should ensure that riders can be seen by day, while retro-reflective strips make the wearer more visible in the dark when illuminated by light.



Standards also set requirements for wear and tear, and stipulate that washing instructions must be included on labelling – even how many cycles the garment can go through while retaining reflective performance. Sizing should also be clearly marked – it is not enough to describe a garment as S, M or L.



What if products are not certified?

It is extremely difficult to judge the reflectivity of a garment in a shop because retro-reflective bands – which are designed to reflect light back at a light source – usually appear as a dull silver/grey colour.

Buying uncertified garments means that riders are taking unnecessary risks with their own lives and those of other road users. If you were involved in a traffic accident, you might find your insurance cover reduced or invalidated if you were wearing hi-viz clothing that did not conform to the appropriate standard.