

Poorly fitting PPE puts women in the marine industry at risk, but new BS brings focus for change – PBO Article



Women in Boat Building CIC have published the findings from their 2025 Survey – ‘PPE for Women in Boatyards’ in a new [report](#), which they are encouraging all boatyards to read.

The results of the survey, and the additional information shared at Southampton Boat Show have been compiled into a report which will hopefully help raise the awareness in yards about the PPE challenge women can face on a daily basis.

‘Since we started the WIBB Community, conversations about PPE have been a regular thing. People find it hard to get PPE that fits their size and body-shape – it’s a seemingly small but really important element of working life which we are asking yards, suppliers and manufacturers to focus on improving for the women working hands-on in the marine industry. Mostly, women are making do - getting on with the job and the yards will be clueless about their challenges. This report has some shocking facts and figures – but nothing we were surprised by.’

Belinda Joslin, WIBB Founder

Some data – but please read the full report!

- 97% of respondents use PPE always or often, but nearly everyone stated that the PPE being used is not designed for women’s bodies
- 90% of respondents have felt restricted or limited in movement and PPE has affected their ability to perform the job
- 68% have issues with glove sizing, 53% with overalls, 40% with mask fit – and 50% of respondents also haven’t had their masks professionally fitted
- PPE-stacking was a recurrent problem – using multiple PPE items, all slightly too big, doesn’t work on a smaller frame, so safety is compromised



New BS for PPE introduced – a focus for change

In the UK, women working in the UK marine industry can now expect access to better-fitting personal protective equipment (PPE) after the launch of [BS 30417 for the Provision of Inclusive PPE](#), unveiled by the UK’s national standards body, the British Standards Institution (BSI).

‘The Women in Boat Building PPE survey results clearly demonstrate a need for yards to provide more inclusive PPE so we are delighted that BS30417 has given an official framework that will ensure safer working environments for women working hands-on in the UK.’

Belinda Joslin, WIBB Founder

The [WIBB PPE Report](#) combines survey data with some of the anecdotal experience of women in our community. This quote says it all.

‘I’m the only women surrounded by kind but unaware blokes’

Please share this story and report, and help us to educate the people who can bring about better access to safer PPE for women in marine trades.



HUGE THANKS to ...

Katy Stickland, Practical Boat Owner Editor for driving the creation of this report, and writing her [brilliant article](#)

Katy Robinson, whose campaigning has led to the creation of the BS30417 – [read more](#)

Thalia Battersby, Yard Operative at [Woodbridge Boatyard](#), for co-writing the survey and Southampton Boat Show presentation with Belinda Joslin

Finally to all the women in our community who shared their experience and completed the survey to create meaningful data on this issue.

[Women in Boat Building](#) is a Community Interest Company run by volunteers.
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