

Your Guide to Hi Vis classes



When your team is in a hazardous workplace, they need to wear Hi Vis safety vests. This is because they're made with highly reflective materials that keep individual workers visible, especially at night.

All Hi Vis safety vests must comply with the EN 20471 standard for safety, categorised in classes based on the amount of both reflective material and high contrast Hi Vis fabric making up the vest.

It's important you understand the differences between the classes of Hi Vis to ensure your workers are safe. The general rule is, the more hazardous your workplace, the more visible they need to be.

How many classes of Hi Vis are there?

- There are three classes of Hi Vis, determined by the total area of fluorescent material and reflective stripe that is on the wearer.
- All class 1 Hi Vis items should have a minimum of 155 square inches of reflective tape, with 0.10m² reflective material and 0.14m² fluorescent material. The reflective stripes should be around the middle in a 360° stripe and above each shoulder.
- Class 2 Hi Vis must have a minimum of 201 square inches of reflective tape, with 0.13m² reflective material and 0.50 m² fluorescent material. Reflective stripes should be over the shoulders and around the middle in either one or two 360° horizontal stripes.
- Class 3 vests must have a minimum of 310 square inches of reflective tape, with 0.20 m² reflective material and 0.80m² fluorescent material. Headlights approaching a worker should be able to make out the silhouette of a person.

How are the classes of Hi Vis different?



Lowest level

This is the lowest level of Hi Vis classification. The most important thing to know is, it is NOT suitable for working roadside or near road traffic.

Class 1 Hi Vis is suitable for those working in low-risk and low-impact areas, as it offers the lowest level of visibility. Class 1 usually involves single garments such as Hi Vis trousers worn on their own.

This class of Hi Vis is typically used by parking attendants, delivery drivers, and roadside assistance personnel in low traffic areas.



Intermediate level

This is most commonly sleeveless vests. Class 2 Hi Vis clothing is only suitable on roads where the speed limit is less than 40mph.

Class 2 is most suitable for working near heavier traffic and in low visibility areas. The weather may reduce visibility in these areas and traffic flow may exceed 25 mph.

Class 2 Hi Vis vests are typically worn by airport workers, high-volume parking or toll booth operators, as well as forest workers.



Highest level

Class 3 Hi Vis is the highest level and applies to sleeved tops. It can be made up of different garments or be a single garment. Examples include Hi Vis bomber jackets and Hi Vis long sleeved vests.

Class 3 Hi Vis is reserved for those that work close to high-traffic areas, including site inspectors, emergency responders, railway workers, and utility crews.

Traffic in these areas may be close to or exceed 50 mph. These workers typically work right next to the road or in other hazardous areas, so they should be as visible as possible to prevent injury.

Remember, if you have any questions about when, where, or why to wear Hi Vis clothing, call us on 01202 718000 to talk to one of our experts about your workplace safety.