**5.8. Fife Coal Company, safety equipment, 1936-45.**

Note: Greater attention to occupational injury and diseases in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the inclusion of many of these conditions and diseases in the statutory system of Workmen’s Compensation scheme, led to efforts to encourage miners to utilise safety equipment to a greater degree. Gloves and knee pads could help to prevent beat hand and beat knee, among other injuries, while helmets and boots offered some protection against impact and crush injuries.

Protective Equipment Sold by the Fife Coal Company Ltd.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Gloves (pairs)** | **Helmets** | **Boots (Pairs)** | **Knee Pads (Pairs)** |
| 1935 | 638 | 1,008 | 624 | 451 |
| 1936 | 8,398 | 2,320 | 3,082 | 1,057 |
| 1937 | 8,745 | 2,387 | 6,137 | 1,208 |
| 1938 | 12,034 | 2,789 | 5,981 | 1,250 |
| 1939 | 11,768 | 4,100 | 5,944 | 889 |
| 1940 | 7,521 | 2,865 | 6,158 | 1,081 |
| 1941 | 6,163 | 2,277 | 5,382 | 1,058 |
| 1942 | 6,504 | 1,787 | 5,195 | 1,440 |
| 1943 | 9,804 | 2,220 | 3,145 | 720 |
| 1944 | 4,608 | 2,160 | 1,366 | 313 |
| 1945 | 11,292 | 1,825 | 918 | 676 |

Percentage of Underground Personnel Wearing Health and Safety Helmets and Gloves

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Total No. of Underground Personnel** | **Number Wearing Safety Helmets** | **Per Cent** | **Number Wearing Safety Gloves** | **Per Cent** |
| 1935 | 5,983 | 826 | 13.6 | 517 | 8.6 |
| 1936 | 6,587 | 2,126 | 32.3 | 1,137 | 17.3 |
| 1937 | 6,763 | 4,225 | 62.5 | 1,849 | 27.3 |
| 1938 | 6,918 | 4,868 | 70.4 | 2,023 | 27.3 |
| 1939 | 6,389 | 5,475 | 85.7 | 2,301 | 29.2 |
| 1940 | 6,257 | 5,137 | 82.4 | 1,658 | 36.0 |
| 1941 | 6,289 | 5,076 | 80.7 | 1,302 | 20.7 |
| 1942 | 6,308 | 4,849 | 76.9 | 1,246 | 19.8 |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 1943 | 6,363 | | 1944 | 6,666 | | | No census taken | | | |
| 1945 | 6,835 | 5,536 | 81.0 | 1,183 | 17.3 |

Source: National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, CB3/134, J. N. Williamson, *Ten Years of Safety Work in a Scottish Colliery Group. The Safety Records of the Fife Coal Company Limited 1936 – 1945* (1946).