

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	No census taken			
1944	6,666				
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).