**How to get Plate gear**

 Getting gear to work the plate can be a hassle, especially when you are on a tight budget.

 Here is the gear needed, and some economically ways to get it.

**Needed**

* Mask
* Throat Guard (HIGHLY recommended)
* Chest Protector
* Belt
* Ball Bag(s)
* Protective Cup (if male)
* Shin Guards
* Protective Plate Shoes (recommended if working Intermediate ball or higher)
* Indicator
* Plate Brush

**Option A: Catcher’s gear**

Many of you have played baseball in the past. If you own catcher’s equipment, you are in luck. The shin guards can usually be transitioned over.

A catcher’s chest protector can be used, but I would recommend against it. You have to remember that a catcher’s chest protector is designed for deflections, not direct shots. The person using it has a glove. Direct shots with a catcher’s chest protector will hurt.

The mask is more difficult, because it is highly advisable for an umpire’s mask to be black or silver. It looks more professional. If your catcher’s mask is not black or silver, it’s not the end of the world, but look into a new mask as soon as it is economically feasible. A black or silver catcher’s mask should be good to go once the dust and dirt is brushed off.

In addition, make sure you tighten your equipment (especially the chest protector) so it is snug with your body if you choose this route.

**Option B: Used Gear**

On eBay and Craigslist, you can usually find decent deals on used umpire gear. I recently found a mask, worn once, for $75. It retails new for $245. It is feasible to find a whole set of umpire gear for less than $100 used.

 Check with me before purchasing any used umpire gear. I can check it out to make sure it is real, it is a good piece of equipment, and that you aren’t being ripped off.

 ALWAYS get your parent’s approval before buying anything online. ALWAYS use extreme caution in using Craigslist.

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**Option C: Package Deals**

 Online retailers offer package deals for gear when an umpire is starting. Ump-attire offers a Champro brand package at $140, which includes nearly everything needed.

 If you are interested in this route, contact me and I’ll get you a link to the deal.

**Option D: New Gear**

I would highly recommend this route to anyone who can afford it. If you plan on being in officiating for the long haul, you can save yourself a lot of money by making a big splash early.

Search around, find what the best equipment for you would be, and get it. Contact me for help or with any questions you have. New, solid gear will last you many years and pay for itself ten times over.

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me.