



Weekly Safety Meeting

Hard Hats

Hard hats are commonly used in many types of workplaces to protect employees from head trauma caused by falling objects, striking the head against an object, or electrical hazards. The hard hat is a piece of personal protective equipment designed to individually protect an employee when all other methods of protection cannot. Its use has often been required on many work sites since all hazards cannot be eliminated.

Hard-hats use an internal suspension structure that absorbs the shock from objects coming into contact with your head. A hard hat has a built-in suspension system that acts as a shock absorber to cushion a blow. Even in instances where the hat is damaged by an object, the shock-absorption still reduces the collision. However, as great as hard hats are, they need consistent upkeep in order to provide quality hazard-prevention.

When Hard Hats Are Required:

OSHA compliant hard hats are required if the following hazardous conditions are present in the work environment:

- If objects may fall from overhead and potentially strike employees;
- If there are stationary fixtures, such as beams and pipes, on which employees may bump their heads; or
- If electrical hazards exist and accidental head contact is a risk.

OSHA Hard Hat Requirements:

- The hard hat must be the type and class (ANSI) for specific hazardous conditions.
- The hard hat's design must perform against impact, penetration, and electrical shock.
- The hard hat should undergo testing requirements to ensure its OSHA compliance.
 - Beyond manufacturers' routine testing, employers should also verify that hard hats are fully compliant.

Types of Hard Hats:

- Type I helmets are intended to reduce the force of impact from a blow only to the top of the head.
- Type II helmets are intended to reduce the force of impact resulting from a blow to the top or side of the head.

Classes of Hard Hats:

- Class G (General) helmets are intended to reduce harm from accidental contact with low voltage conductors and are tested at 2200 volts.
- Class E (Electrical) helmets are intended to reduce harm from accidental contact with higher voltage conductors and are tested at 20,000 volts.
- Class C (Conductive) helmets are not intended to provide protection against contact with electrical hazards.

ANSI Requirements:

- Each revision of the ANSI Z89.1 standard has specific labeling requirements for hard hats. Each hard hat must have the following information clearly marked inside the hat:
- Manufacturer's name;
- ANSI standard that the hard hat conforms with, such as "ANSI Z89.1-2009;"
- ANSI type (type I or II) and class designation (G, E or C);
- Size range for fitting; and
- Date of manufacture.

If the hard hat meets Z89.1-2009, it must also contain the following as required:

- **LT** – When the helmet is designed to provide protection at low temperatures 22 °F (-30 °C); and
- **HV** – When the helmet meets all requirements for high visibility.

Wearing Hard Hats Backwards:

Using hard hats backwards or re-configuring the helmet to make the brim face behind you is known as “reverse donning.” The 2009 update to the ANSI Z89.1 standard specifically addressed reverse donning for the very first time.

The 2009 version of the ANSI Z89.1 standard contains provisions for testing a hard hat with the bill to the rear (“reverse donning”).

If the hard hat meets Z89.1-2009 for reverse donning:

- The label will have two arrows curving to form a circle when the helmet can be worn forwards or backwards.

Remember:

Choose and use hard hats correctly to protect your head. Use the correct class of hard hat to protect against impact, penetration and electricity. Inspect and care for it properly to assure that it keeps its protective qualities.

FALLING OBJECTS CAN CAUSE DEATH...BE SMART AND PROTECT YOUR HEAD!!

