



Weekly Safety Meeting

Head Protection

Hard hats are commonly used in many types of workplaces to protect employees from head trauma caused by falling objects, striking their 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. Often, its use has been required on many work sites since all hazards cannot be eliminated.

With over 100,000 occupational head injuries reported every year, prevention of head injuries is an important factor in every safety program. A survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of accidents and injuries noted that 84% of workers who suffered impact injuries to the head were not wearing head protection. The majority of workers were injured while performing their normal jobs at their regular worksites.

Protective headgear must meet ANSI Standard Z89.1 (Protective Headgear for Industrial Workers).

Types of Hard Hats:

Type I - helmets reduce the force of impact resulting from a blow only to the top of the head.

Type II - helmets reduce the force of impact resulting from a blow that may be received off center or to the top of the head.

Protective Headgear Classes:

Hard hat class designations G, E, and C determine recognized service values and are available in both types.

- CLASS - G Hard Hats: Are designated as general service, limited voltage protection, and are intended for protection against impact hazards.
 - They are used in mining, building construction, shipbuilding, tunneling, timber and lumber operations, and manufacturing.
- CLASS - E Hard Hats: Are designated as utility service, high voltage helmets and are intended for protection against impact and penetration from falling or flying objects and from high voltage shock and burn.
 - They are used extensively by electrical workers.
- CLASS - C Hard Hats: Are designated as special service with no voltage protection.
 - They are specifically designed for lightweight comfort and impact protection.

Inspection:

Inspect a hard hat when it is new and first put into use, prior to each day's use, and after an incident where the integrity has been challenged. When inspecting a new hard hat, ensure that it is the proper hat for the job or the exposure to be expected and make sure all parts are included with the hard hat. Also, follow the manufacturer's instructions to assemble or attach the parts and adjust the headband for proper fit--snug, but not tight.

When inspecting a hard hat prior to each day's use, look for gouges, cracks, deterioration, chalking or discoloration, flaking, suspension properly attached to the shell, all straps in good condition, and cleanliness. When a hard hat is damaged, replace the damaged part or replace the entire hard hat.

Hard Hat Tips:

1. Never drill ventilation holes in a hard hat.
2. Do not alter the shell or suspension in any way.
3. Do not wear or carry anything in between the shell and the suspension of your hard hat.
4. Only use a suspension that is made specifically for the shell. Hard hats should never be worn on top of everyday hats or caps (with the exception of winter liners made specifically for the hat) since they interfere with or eliminate the shock absorbing effect of the suspension.
5. Hard hats should be replaced every five years. Hard hats exposed to heat or ultraviolet light may need to be replaced every two years. Never store hard hats in the back window of a vehicle or other place where it is exposed to ultraviolet light.
6. Keep coverage with stickers to a minimum so the hard hat can still be seen and inspected.
7. Hard hats can only be worn backwards if the manufacturer states explicitly that the hat has been tested and passed in that manner and that the suspension is positioned as required by that test.
8. If a hard hat has been dropped more than 8 to 10 feet or has been struck forcibly, it should be replaced immediately.

Remember:

Make sure your protective headgear is appropriate for the risks you may encounter on the job. Your hard hat should fit properly and be cleaned, maintained, and inspected regularly. If for any reason you suspect the safety values of your hard hat were compromised in any way, replace it immediately. Avoid the risk of a head injury; your hard hat does you no good if it is not worn.

A FALLING OBJECT IS A WEAPON...A HARD HAT IS YOUR PROTECTION!

