

# Protective Head Wear

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

One serious blow to the head can leave an otherwise strong and healthy person permanently brain-damaged or disabled for life. At best, a blow on the head can give you a whopper of a headache. Therefore, it is crucial to protect it from the impact of falling objects, painful bumps and in some cases, from high-voltage electric shock. ANSI approved head protection is generally required when there is 'a potential for head injury from falling or moving objects' and where employees' heads are exposed to electricity.

Hard Hats:

The American National Standards Institute has established guidelines for helmets, the latest of which is ANSI Z89.1-1986. The standard indicates that the manufacturer's name must be listed inside the helmet, and it must have one of the following ANSI designations:

1. Class A: These protect the head from the impact of falling objects and from electric shock during contact with exposed low voltage conductors.
2. Class B : These have the same function as Class A except that they prevent electric shock when exposed to high voltage conductors.
3. Class C: These protect the head from falling objects, but offer no electrical protection.

Hard hats primarily protect from impacts to the top of the head, limit penetration of sharp objects, which hit the top of the shell and provide some lateral protection. To be effective, however, helmets must be properly worn. Some workers wear their hard hats backwards, which lessens the protection. If it is worn tilted back on the head, it offers virtually no protection at all.

Hard Hat Care:

1. Inspect helmets daily for cracks, signs of wear and deterioration to insure that they provide the amount of protection originally intended.
2. Helmets that exhibit chalking, cracking, or lose all their surface gloss should be discarded.
3. If helmets must be marked for identification, use adhesive decals or tape. They should not be painted, cut or engraved.

4. Do not keep helmets on the window shelf of a vehicle since extreme heat can affect the degree of protection. The hat can also become a projectile in the event of a vehicle accident.
5. Replace internal suspension systems once a year or if the system detaches from the shell. Hair oils and dirt can weaken the shock-absorbing suspension system.
6. At least every 30 days, protective helmets and their sweatbands and cradles should be washed in warm, soapy water and rinsed thoroughly.
7. Bump Caps: Made of lightweight plastic, bump caps do not protect against serious blows to the head or falling objects and should never be worn in place of hard hats. They are useful, however, when working in cramped spaces where painful bumps, scrapes or cuts to the head are a potential.
8. Use your head to absorb knowledge, not blows to the head!

## **GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW**

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

## **ENDING THE MEETING**

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

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Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

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**Comments**

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