

Personal Protective Equipment: Head Protection

Objective: To familiarize employees with common types of head protection and best practices for their use.

The brain is the control center of your body. If it's damaged in any way, your entire body will be at risk! Normally, your skull protects your brain from injury, but when falling or flying objects are a hazard, additional protection must be worn.

Common Hazards that Require Head Protection

Workplace hazards that could cause injury to the head include:

- Falling objects
- Contact with protruding or fixed objects
- Contact with electrical hazards

Hard Hats & Safety Helmets

Safety helmets are similar in nature to hard hats. They are typically made of composite materials that reduce the weight of the helmet. Safety helmets have a chin strap that stays in place in the event of a fall. Employers should assess the most appropriate type of head protection for their employees in their workplace hazard assessment.

Common Types & Classes of Hard Hats

The type and class of hard hat needed depends on the hazards in your work area. There should be a label inside each hard hat shell that lists the class of hard hat, manufacturer information, and the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) designation.

The two types of hard hats are:



Ensure you have a proper fit for the type and class of hard hat you use.

Types of Hard Hat	Protects Against
Type 1	Intended to reduce the force of impact from a blow to the top of the head.
Type 2	Intended to reduce the force of impact from a blow that is off-centered, to the side, or the top of the head.

The different classes of hard hats are:

Class of Hard Hat	Protects Against
Class G – General Duty	Provide impact and penetration resistance; limited voltage protection up to 2,200 volts.
Class E - Electrical	Provide impact and penetration resistance; high-voltage shock and burn protection up to 20,000 volts.
Class C - Conductive	Lightweight protection, but no protection from electrical hazards

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Inspection Criteria

Inspect your hard hat prior to each use for any potential issues. Inspection recommendations include:

Inspect the shell:

- Run your hands over the shell and inspect for any cracks, dents, gouges, or other forms of degradation that may compromise the hard hat's protective integrity.
- Hard hats with excessive wear or damage must be removed from service.
- Ultraviolet light and high temperatures can also cause degradation to a hard hat.
- If you work outside or in extreme temperatures, increase the frequency of your inspections.
- Replace the hard hat if the plastic becomes brittle, faded, or can no longer flex under normal pressure.
- To test for elasticity, the shell should be able to compress approximately 1" if pressed together with two hands and return to its normal shape quickly.

Inspect the suspension (headband and chin strap):

- Check for cracks and frays in the strap.
- Inspect the headband for damaged material and clips for broken plastic.
- Suspensions can be purchased independently from the shell and should be replaced immediately if damaged. The suspension should be from the same manufacturer as the shell, as mixing manufacturers could compromise the functionality of the hard hat.

Remember: *If a hard hat has taken a direct impact, it must be taken out of service, even if there is no visible damage.*

Head Protection Best Practices

Head protection is critical in conjunction with other PPE to keep you safe at work.

- Clean and dry head protection before storing.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Never modify the hard hat, as it will weaken the shell.
- Don't wear items that will obstruct the fit of the hat.
- Never store items between the suspension and the shell.



Store hard hats away from direct sunlight to prevent ultraviolet (UV) light degradation of the shell.

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This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving training on the abovementioned subject. They understand that this training was only a general overview of the subject and that they should contact their supervisor with any questions or concerns.

Organization: _____ **Date:** _____

Trainer: _____ **Trainer's Signature:** _____

Class Participants:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

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