

Hard Hats

Prepare: Quiet location? No distractions? Talk aids ready?

Reason: To remind everybody of the importance, use and maintenance of a hard hat.

Why: To try and stop head injuries.

Outline: This talk will cover what you should and should not do with a hard hat and why you should wear one.



Overview

- In construction, a hard hat is a critical piece of personal protection. It is the last line of defence against objects impacting one of your most vital assets - your head. If your hard hat is not in good condition or used properly, the consequences could be tragic
- The slightest damage to any part of the brain will cause malfunction of some area of the body. The skull, under normal circumstances, protects the brain. But when a possibility of injury from falling or flying objects exists, additional protection is required.
- Hard hats not only reduce the chances of serious injury resulting from falling objects but protect you when you bump your head on things — like machinery, ductwork, and steelworks

Q: What does a hard hat protect you from?

How to care for hard hats

- The better care you take of your hard hat, the better care it will take of you.
- Properly adjust suspension systems to maintain clearance between your head and the shell of the hat.
- Keep your hard hat clean and free of solvents, adhesives, grease, and oil.

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- The usual maintenance for headgear is to try and keep your hat clean, removing dirt and stains with a mild detergent, like washing-up liquid. Give it a good rinse in warm water and check the hat for any scratches or damage. You don't have to spend hours doing this - a minute or two every so often to check everything is working should be enough.

The Do's and Don'ts of Head Protection

DO:

- Replace headgear that is pitted, holed, cracked or brittle.
- Replace headgear that has been subjected to a blow even though damage cannot be seen.
- Remove from service any headgear if its serviceability is in doubt.
- Replace headgear and components according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Consult regulations or your supplier for information on headgear.
- Check the expiry date which can be found under the visor.

DON' T:

- Don't cut holes for ventilation.
- Don't heat and bend.
- Don't substitute a "bump cap." They aren't strong enough.
- Don't paint your hard hat.
- Don't put anything under it except your head or purpose made PPE.
- Don't wear it backwards.

Q: When should you replace your hard hat?

Use of Hoodies

When worn as per **image A**, these garments can:

- Restrict your vision, particularly peripheral vision.
- Limit your ability to hear warnings or oncoming plant.

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- Can compromise the performance of other PPE (e.g., ear defence, safety eyewear)

Where required, a purpose made balaclava **image B** should be worn. When selecting these, consider the following:

- Size and fit for the user.
- Thermal properties
- Compatibility with other PPE
- Perforated area for ears
- Fire retardant properties
- Reflective properties

Q: How can wearing a hoodie under your Hard Hat compromise your safety?

Some common complaints and the truth

"It's too heavy." Hard hats are only a few ounces heavier than a cloth cap.

"It's too hot." Measurements taken in hot weather show that the temperature under a hard hat is often cooler than it is outside.

"It gives me a headache." A thump on the head from something which has fallen two floors will give you a worse one. There is, however, no medical reason why a properly adjusted hard hat should cause a headache. Don't alter the suspension system on the hard hat because you won't get the designed protection.

"It won't stay on." A chin strap will solve this problem. Otherwise, you will find that a hard hat stays put if it's fitted properly.

The hard hat is a useful piece of safety equipment. But it must be properly adjusted and worn and kept in good condition to give you maximum protection

Do you have any questions for me?

Questions for you

Q: Why should you wear your chin strap?

Q: How do you check that your hard hat is in date?

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