

# Hard Hats -- Who Needs Them?

*Don't lose your head over false objections!*



Here are some answers to questions and comments most commonly heard.

*"Why all the emphasis on hard hats?"*

Remember, the brain is the control center of the body. The slightest damage to any part will cause a malfunction of some area of the body, either temporarily or permanently. The skull, under normal circumstances, protects the brain, but when the possibility of brain damage from outside sources exists, additional protection is required.

*"My hard hat is too hot in the summer."*

Tests in hot weather have shown that the temperature inside a hard hat is 12 degrees cooler than a baseball style cap. Your head is kept cool because of the ventilation provided by air spaces between the shell and the suspension. The hat's surface reflects the heat too.

*"My hard hat is too cold in the winter."*

Liners that come down over the ears are readily available for cold days. Hard hats must not be worn on top of everyday hats or parkas, and of course, you must not remove the suspension.

*"My hard hat is too heavy and strains my neck."*

The weight of the hat should go unnoticed if the hat is properly worn and maintained. The average safety hat weighs about

# Stop Signs

*The most frequently misused sign in New Hampshire*

The most common regulatory sign in use on New Hampshire streets and highways is the STOP sign. Unfortunately, it is also the sign most frequently used improperly.

STOP sign installations that do not conform to the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD) standards invite liability suits against the local jurisdiction responsible for the installations.

The last sentence in Section 2B-5 of the MUTCD reads, "STOP signs should not be used for speed control." Speed control is probably the most common misuse of the STOP sign. A worried mother calls and says the cars on her street are speeding and she has little kids, and could you do something like put a STOP sign at her intersection? **Don't do it!**

Enforcing the speed limits is much more effective, for two reasons.

143 ounces. Your head weighs about 13 pounds. That is one ounce of protection for every pound of head. It's a real bargain!

*"When should I wear a hard hat?"*

Check with your supervisor for the official rules for safety and protective clothing or for more information contact the *New Hampshire Municipal Trust Worker's Compensation* at 1-800-852-3328. As a general rule, however, always wear a hard hat when working:

- on or adjacent to the traveled portion of the roadway (generally the right-of-way)
- in contractor's hard hat zones
- while operating heavy equipment
- where there is danger of head injury from impact, falling, or flying objects
- where there is danger of contact with a high voltage electrical source.

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- Studies have shown that speeds between intersections are not significantly reduced but actually tend to increase slightly after the installation of a STOP sign. Most vehicles will go the same speed as they did prior to the installation within 50 to 100 feet of the sign.
- Improper installations promote disregard for all STOP signs.

In other studies of STOP signs installed to control speed, it was found that most of the signs were disobeyed on a wide scale. When not forced to stop by a priority vehicle only 5-20 percent of all drivers came to a complete stop, 40-60 percent slowed to less than 5mph and 20-40 percent of all drivers did not stop at all.

Another common misuse of STOP signs is the multiway STOP sign installation. Most intersections under local jurisdiction do not warrant this type of control (Section 2B-6 of the MUTCD discusses the multiway installation). Prior to installing a multiway STOP, traffic volumes on approaching roadways should be approximately equal and the *minimum* volumes should be *at least* 500 vehicles per hour for any eight hours of an average day (total volume of 500 vehicles from all approaches, not 500 vehicles from each approach).

Remember, *anything* in New Hampshire that does not correspond to the standards set forth in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* is negligence and opens you up to an "open-and-shut" tort case.

Any questions? How can you get a copy of the MUTCD? Call the New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center at 1-800-423-0060.

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