



Safety Brief 2010-4

If You Are on Your Feet, It Should be on Your Head *Hard Hat Use*

You May Not Need A Hard Hat, If... That's right, you MAY not need to wear a hard hat if:

- X-rays show you have 4-inches of skull surrounding your brain and all the other sensitive wiring above your shoulders.
- You have six months to live and five months have already gone by.
- You're the kind of person who enjoys playing Russian roulette.
- You enjoy being the center of attention – as when that 2-pound rock is pinched by the tires of a grader and flies across the road until it is stopped by your head!

Questions and Comments about Hard Hats: For some reason, there's always someone who objects to wearing a hard hat. Here are some answers to the most commonly heard objections and comments:

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 also reflects the heat.

My hard hat is too cold in winter. Liners that come down over the ears are readily available for use on cold days.

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

How to Wear Your Hard Hat. It is important that you properly adjust the inner suspension. The weight of the hat should go unnoticed if the hat is securely on you. The new ratchet adjustment helps by allowing a more accurate and faster adjustment.

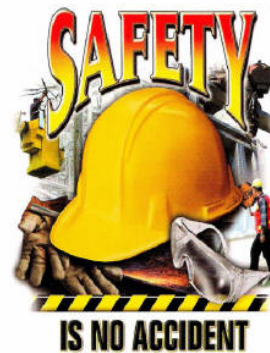
By the way, chinstraps are available to afford maximum protection. Think of the limited protection a football player would have without a chinstrap on his helmet. Several injuries are reported each year when hard hats are knocked off and head injuries occur as a result. Remember, a hard hat cannot protect you if it is not on your head. In addition to cushioning blows, your hat can protect against electric shock, chemical spills, or hot materials.

Hard hats must NOT be worn on top of everyday hats or parkas, and of course, you must not remove the suspension. Periodically, check the shell for cracks and the suspension system for cracking, tearing, or fraying. Never paint, drill holes, or use solvents on your hard hat because they weaken the shell. As a general rule, the entire hat should be replaced every two years.

When to Wear a Hard Hat: Check with your supervisor for the official rules about safety and protective clothing for your agency.

As a general rule, always wear a hard hat when working:

- On or adjacent to the traveled portion of the roadway.
- In contractor hardhat zones.
- While operating heavy equipment.
- Where there is danger of head injury from impact, and/or falling or flying objects.
- Where there is danger of contact with a high voltage electric source.



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