Hard Hats Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

Head protection sites is crucial for protecting against head injuries. It is not only falling tools, materials or debris that could land on the head; head protection is meant to protect against flying objects, electrical shock, burns and running into low beams. Not all hard hats can protect workers from all these hazards.

What’s the Danger

Injuries to the head due to falling objects or bump hazards are often serious and have been known to be fatal. Wearing a hard hat not only protects the top of your head, but it can also protect those things attached to your cranium. Such items include your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Too often employees perceive the hard hat as just “something else they make me wear” and fail to recognize the full importance of this critical piece of personal protective equipment.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

HARD HAT BASICS

Hard hats should be worn in any area that has the potential for workers:

- to be hit or struck by falling, fixed, moving or protruding objects.
- to come in contact with electricity.
- be exposed to UV, weather, and extremes of temperature.

Choose the Right Hard Hat for the Job

- Industrial – suitable for use in construction, factories and quarries
- High temperature – suitable for use in processes such as steel and glass manufacturing
- Bushfire fighting – suitable for use by emergency personnel for combating bush fires
- Peak less – allowing clear upward vision
- Peaked – providing shade for the eyes and some facial protection
- Full brim – providing fuller protection from falling objects and UV as well as water shedding

HOW HARD HATS WORK. Hard hats are made of a hard outer shell designed to take the initial impact, and an inner harness designed to absorb and spread this impact which minimises the effects of the force to the skull.

Wear Hard Hats Correctly

- Adjust the harness cradle to ensure comfort and total contact with your head at all times.
- It is recommended you do not wear clothing items on your head as this will result in the harness cradle becoming ineffective. This includes hoods, baseball caps, thickly woven or heavily seamed beanies or balaclavas. Some hairstyles such as dreadlocks are also not recommended.
- To secure your hard hat, you can use the elastic chin straps, or a four-point retaining strap integrated with a harness when working at height.
- Ensure any attachments are compatible with the make and model of the hard hat.
- If you have any specific questions about wearing your hard hat it is a good idea to check with the manufacturer.

Hard Hat Maintenance

- Store in a cool, dry environment, away from direct sunlight, heavy or sharp objects.
- Keep your hard hat away from chemicals including paints, paint thinners, solvent based adhesives (some stickers) and cleaning agents.
- Clean by scrubbing and immersing in warm soapy water and rinsing in clean warm water.
- Sweat bands must be regularly replaced as required.
- If the hat loses its glossy finish and appears chalky, the shell must be replaced

Safety Check for Hard Hats. All hard hat components should be inspected at least weekly for signs of dents, cracks, penetration and damage due to impact, rough treatment or wear. A simple test is to squeeze the sides of the hard hat together and listen and feel for signs of stress or cracking which would indicate brittleness and deterioration. Field tests have shown helmet shells last for three years from issue date.

User-date VS Manufacture Date. Record the date of issue by writing on the inside of the hat with a marker and replacing the hat every two or three years. That means the date that you are issued the hat, not the date of manufacture.

Training For Workers in the care, use and maintenance of hard hats.

- The hazards controlled by hard hat use
- How the hard hat works
- Limitations of hard hats
- When hard hats must be worn
- How to wear a hard hat correctly
- How to adjust the hard hat for comfort and fit
- How to correctly store a hard hat
- How to identify signs of wear or damage
- How to clean and maintain their hard hat.

HARD HAT WRAP-UP FOR WORKERS

- **Fit:** For maximum protection, a hard hat should fit securely on the head and the suspension should be snug.
- **Inspection:** Users should inspect their hard hat shells and suspension frequently. The suspension should be replaced annually and the shell every two to five years, depending on usage.
- **Disposal:** If a hard hat has sustained an impact, it may need to be disposed of even if damage is not visible.
- **Extra objects:** Items should never be placed between the suspension and the shell.
- **Storage:** Avoid leaving hard hats in direct sunlight or extreme temperatures for

extended periods of time as this will degrade most plastic shells.
- **Cleaning:** Certain chemicals, solvents or gasoline can also weaken shells.
- **Alteration:** Workers should never puncture, modify or engrave the shell or suspension of a hard hat.

FINAL WORD

Using a hard hat when needed is an important part of workplace safety. Talk to your employees today about how to properly inspect their hard hat and how to properly care for it.