PPE – Head-Face Stats & Facts



DID YOU KNOW?

The last Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Personal Protective Equipment showed that, in most cases, when a worker was injured, they were not using PPE. Of the workers who sustained head injuries, 84% of them were not wearing hard hats, and 99% of workers who suffered facial injuries were not using face protection.

The purpose of head protection in any employer's PPE program is to help control the uncontrollable – which is to mitigate and/or eliminate hazards and exposure to injury while on the job. But sometimes despite best efforts, injuries can occur – bringing with it long-term damage and even death.

With that in mind, we wanted to take a look at some significant safety helmet injury hazards and statistics, so you know what you're up against – and to help you get the head protection that you need to help keep you out of the statistics.

Common Hazards to Guard your Head Against

Being at risk for a head injury is dependent on your work environment and its associated hazards, as not all working environments require head protection. However, when it is required, a worker must wear protection even when there are no apparent signs of danger. Industries like construction, power, oil and gas, mining, forestry, and others enforce such standards as the risk of head injury to workers is continuously present.

Employers must ensure their workers wear head protection if they are at risk of these common hazards:

- Being struck by falling objects
- Bumping their heads on fixed objects
- Coming into contact with electrical hazards

These common hazards encompass most ways in which a potential injury could occur, and they can have different meanings depending on the work environment. Understanding the potential hazards at your workplace is imperative in assessing the type of PPE needed to keep injuries at bay.

Injury and Death by the Numbers

Injuries to the head are scary and life-changing. As mentioned previously, head injuries can result in long-term damage and death, with injuries often including memory loss, fractured bones, and spine damage – some of which cannot be cured.

In 2012, more than 65,000 cases involving days away from work occurred due to head injuries in the workplace (according to the 2015 edition of the National Safety

Council chartbook “Injury Facts”). That same year, 1,020 workers died from head injuries sustained on the job.

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are the primary type of head injuries. TBI is a significant cause of death The Hard Truth about Safety Helmet Injuries and Statistics and disability in the United States, contributing to about 30% of all injury death. Despite the security given to workers from the safety helmet standard, there are still incidents of traumatic brain injury, especially in construction, where there were 2,200 fatalities between 2003 and 2010.

However, according to a survey about worksite accidents and injuries conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 84% of all workers who suffered head injuries were not wearing head protection.

And that can get pricey. A mild head injury, such as a concussion, can cost a company over $100k, whereas moderate injuries are estimated to cost $941,000 and severe injuries up to $3 million – and that’s not including the cost of emotional and physical issues.

Stay Out of the Stats

We don’t want you to fall into these numbers. The best way to equip yourself or your workers for the hazards on the job is to evaluate your work environment and find the PPE that is mandated or needed. Companies can also implement protocols specific to their work environment in addition to wearing the proper PPE, including the use of safety helmet area warning signs, toe boards on elevated areas, tool lanyards when working above someone, and avoiding working directly underneath others.

At the very least, remember to bring awareness to the potential hazards in your workplace and ensure PPE is applicable and wearable.