

Keep Your Head

Each year there are thousands of head injuries in the construction industry. Injuries range from minor concussions to death. Head injuries are caused by falling, flying, swinging or dangling objects, by bumping your head against a fixed object and by electrical shocks and burns. Hard hats are specifically designed to resist penetration and absorb the shock of a blow.



ANATOMY OF A HARD HAT

- ▶ Hard hats are made of semirigid materials such as fiberglass, thermoplastics and aluminum.
- ▶ Inside the hat are straps that pass over your head and connect to an adjustable headband. These straps hold the shell of the hat away from your head. There should be an inch and a quarter between you and the shell.
- ▶ The outer shell and the unique inner suspension system of a hard hat protect you from injury by absorbing and distributing impact over a wide area of your head.
- ▶ Full-brimmed hats (such as those worn by firefighters) have a brim that extends all the way around the hat to protect your neck, shoulders and the back and sides of your head.
- ▶ Visored hats have a brim in front, an advantage in tight spaces.
- ▶ Chin and nape straps keep the hat from being bumped or blown off.

Types of Hard Hats

CLASS A—is used for protection against impact and penetration hazards and low-voltage shock, and are typically used during building construction, tunneling, lumbering and mining activities.

CLASS B—protects against high-voltage shock and burns as well as impact and penetration hazards and are used during electrical work.

CLASS C—offers lightweight protection against impact and penetration hazards when there's no danger from electrical hazards.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- ▶ Always wear your hard hat with the bill in the front.
- ▶ Be sure to select the proper type of hard hat for your job.
- ▶ Make sure your hard hat is marked with the American National Standards Institute label (ANSI Z89.1) next to the manufacturer's name, and a Class A, B or C marking.
- ▶ Never use the space between the suspension straps and the hard hat as a storage area.
- ▶ Avoid wearing headgear under your hard hat, except for cold-weather liners specially designed for such use.
- ▶ Never borrow a hard hat or loan yours.
- ▶ Adjust your hard-hat straps to fit you snugly. Your hard hat should not tilt or slide around.
- ▶ Check your hard hat daily for signs of damage such as dents, cracks or penetration.
- ▶ Never use your hard hat if you find any signs of damage.
- ▶ Replace any worn or frayed webbing.
- ▶ Never drill holes in your hard hat for ventilation or any other reason.
- ▶ Avoid dropping your hard hat, and replace it if it is ever dropped or hit.
- ▶ Never store your hard hat in your car window or other hot place—sunlight and heat reduce the hat's protective ability.
- ▶ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and periodic inspection of your hard hat.
- ▶ Never paint your hard hat—certain paints and thinners can damage and weaken it.
- ▶ Never put decals or stickers on your hard hat. They can hide damage.
- ▶ Replace your glossy fiberglass or thermoplastic material hard hat if it becomes dull.