Hard hat safety toolbox talk: head protection

29 CFR 1926.100, 1910.132, 1910.135

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

Is your hard hat on your head right now, and when did you last look at the shell and the suspension?

Why it matters

A tool, a bolt or a piece of debris falling from above can seriously hurt your head in a moment. A hard hat is built to take that hit, but only if it is the right type, fits you and is in good shape. A cracked shell or a worn suspension will not protect you.

Key points

1. **Wear it where something can hit your head**
   In general industry, the employer must make sure each affected employee wears a protective helmet when working where there is a potential for head injury from falling objects (29 CFR 1910.135(a)(1)). In construction, employees working where there is a possible danger of head injury from impact, falling or flying objects, or electrical shock and burns must be protected by protective helmets (29 CFR 1926.100(a)). Put it on before you enter the area, and keep it on.
   29 CFR 1926.100(a)

2. **Use the right hat for the hazard**
   Head protection must meet one of the listed ANSI Z89.1 standards, or the employer must show it is at least as effective (29 CFR 1926.100(b)(1) and (b)(3)). Check the label inside the shell. Near exposed electrical conductors, you need a helmet designed to reduce electrical shock hazard (29 CFR 1910.135(a)(2)). A bump cap protects against bumps only. Do not use one where objects can fall.
   29 CFR 1926.100(b)(1)

3. **Get a proper fit**
   The employer must select PPE that properly fits each affected employee (29 CFR 1910.132(d)(1)(iii)). Adjust the headband so the hat sits level and does not slide when you bend. Wear the brim forward unless the hat is made to be worn another way. Do not put anything between your head and the suspension that changes the fit.
   29 CFR 1910.132(d)(1)(iii)

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4 Inspect it before each use

Look for cracks, dents, chips, gouges, brittle or chalky spots and worn straps or suspension. Flex the shell gently. Check the date on the hat if there is one, and follow the manufacturer on how long it lasts. PPE must be maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition (29 CFR 1910.132(a)). Replace a hard hat after a heavy hit, even if it looks fine.

29 CFR 1910.132(a)

5 Care for it and do not alter it

Clean the shell with mild soap and water. Store it away from direct sun, heat and chemicals, and do not leave it on a hot dashboard. Do not drill, paint or stick things on it unless the manufacturer says it is okay, because that can weaken the shell or hide damage. Only use accessories made for your model.

6 Know what training covers

Employees who must use PPE must be trained to know when PPE is necessary, what PPE is necessary, how to put it on, adjust and wear it, its limitations and its care, maintenance, useful life and disposal (29 CFR 1910.132(f)(1)). If you are not sure about any of these for your hard hat, ask.

29 CFR 1910.132(f)(1)

Scenario

Picture this: A worker walks under a scaffold carrying a bucket and does not wear his hard hat because it is hot and uncomfortable. Another worker wears a bump cap he bought online. Above them, a coworker kicks a loose fitting off a platform edge. What should each person have done differently?

Crew discussion

1. Where on this site could something fall on us, and where do we need a hard hat?
2. What type and label is on the hard hat you are wearing today?
3. What do you check on your hard hat before each shift?
4. How do we handle someone who is not wearing head protection in a required area?

Bottom line **Wear the right hard hat, fit it well, check it before each use and replace it when it is damaged.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema: Head protection and hard hats / Protección de la cabeza y cascos

Date / Fecha: _____

Trainer / Instructor: _____ Location / Lugar: _____ Company / Empresa: _____

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