



# TOOL BOX TALK



## Proverbial Hard Hat

As much as it appears to be common sense for workers on a construction site to wear a hard hat, there still needs to be a reminder as to when a hard hat would be required, the purpose of a hard hat and caring for same. A hard hat is required whenever there is an existing hazard or potential for falling objects and/or a compression hit from the side onto the head. It is the employer's responsibility to do a PPE Hazard Assessment to determine when and if hard hats are required. Most jobs have a 100% hard hat requirement. The hard hat is designed to give maximum protection when it is worn properly, i.e., the full brim extending in the front to prevent falling objects from hitting the face, glasses, etc. Some hats contain florescent pigments used for night work, i.e., utility workers or road work. Other hats are designated by the American National Standard Institute for use around electrical high voltage. Make sure that you have the right hat for the right work.

The hat basically comes in two basic parts. The shell and the suspension system. The shell is made up of plastics, fiber and resin and is a shock absorber for most materials. The web based suspension system provides shock absorbing space between the shell and your head. It also permits air circulation and maintains the proper degree of comfort. It is important for you to ensure that your hard hat fits properly every day. Especially if you have grown additional hair or had your hair cut. If the fit is too loose the hard hat provides less protection from a blow to the head. If the webs are too tight the shock will not be properly re-circulated and the head and neck may suffer.

Care for the hard hat is important. The hard hat should be cleaned with a sponge and mild detergent and warm water to help maintain the life of the hat. Never store your hard hat in the back end of a pick up truck where there is excessive sunlight. Sunlight may start to disintegrate the thermal plastic and resin material on the shell. The webbing and buckle should be checked for damage and if so replaced. Under normal wear the web system should be replaced once a year.

Supervisors and Project Managers should always wear their hard hat as soon as they crest the job site to set a good example for others.

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