

Toolbox Safety Series



Hard Hats

“HARD HATS”

As Mighty Casey walked to the plate, he was sure he'd bang one out of the park for a home run. But, he struck out and his team lost. His past performance had given him a false sense of security.

NO ROOM FOR CASEY'S ON CONSTRUCTION JOBS

I see a lot of "Casey's" on construction jobs, walking around without hard hats. And sooner or later, they're going to be struck out- literally. Some of them think nothing can happen to them because they haven't been hurt so far. But they never know when a piece of concrete, a small rock, or a tool is going to fall ten stories and land on their head. As a matter of fact, there are very few occasions on a construction job when a hard hat should not be worn.

HARD HATS SERVE SEVERAL PURPOSES

Hard hats not only reduce the chances of serious injury resulting from falling objects, but protect you when you bump your head on things- like machinery, ductwork, ceiling tie wires and forms. Non-conductive hard hats protect you from electrical shock and burns. Never wear metal hard hats around electrical work.

HOW TO CARE FOR HARD HATS

The better care you take of your hard hat, the better care it will take of you. Here are some suggestions:

1. Properly adjust suspension systems to maintain clearance between your head and the shell of the hat.
2. Don't cut holes for ventilation. Don't heat and bend.
3. Don't substitute a "bump cap." They aren't strong enough.
4. Don't paint your hard hat.
5. Don't put anything under it except your head; this includes cigarettes, notebooks, and such.
6. Don't wear it backwards.

SOME COMMON COMPLAINTS AND THE REAL TRUTH

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We sometimes hear the following complaints about hard hats. But is there any real basis for them?

"It's too heavy." (Hard hats are only a few ounces heavier than a cloth cap, but the extra protection you get is worth the extra weight.)

"It's too hot." (Measurements taken in hot weather show that the temperature under a hard hat often is cooler than it is outside.)

"It gives me a headache." (A thump on the head from something which has fallen two floors will give you a worse one. There is, however, no medical reason why a properly adjusted hard hat should cause a headache. Don't alter the suspension system or the hard hat, because you won't get the designed protection.)

"It won't stay on." (You're right; it won't in a high wind. A chin strap will solve this problem. Otherwise, you will find that a hard hat stays put no matter how much stooping or bending you have to do - if it's fitted properly.)

"It's noisy." (That's your imagination. In fact, tests show that properly worn hard hats will shield your ears from noise to some extent.)

NO HELP UNLESS YOU WEAR IT

The hard hat is a useful piece of safety equipment. But like any other protective device, it must be properly adjusted and worn and kept in good condition to give you maximum protection.

