Hardhats Protect Soft Heads

Fatal or disabling head injuries happen when people are hit in the head with running equipment, tools falling from above, broken machine parts propelled through the air and many other moving and stationary objects.

What's at Stake

A hardhat provides protection against many workplace hazards. It is designed to provide a barrier and absorb shock, to prevent your brain from being injured. Even a minor brain injury can change your life, making it difficult to cope with physical, mental and emotional challenges.

One hardhat, two parts

Hardhats are made in two distinct parts. The first is the hard outer shell that protects against impact and penetration, preventing objects from striking your head. The second part is the inner suspension system, which absorbs the shock of impacts to prevent head injury.

What Can Go Wrong

A female construction worker was working on the ground level of the site while other workers were engaged with tasks on scaffolds. Her hardhat didn't fit properly and slipped backwards on her head. A coworker on scaffolding dropped his hammer and it struck her on her forehead, causing severe brain damage.

How to Protect Yourself

Different styles and materials

- Hardhats come in several styles, such as front brim only or full brim. They can be made of various materials such as plastic, fiberglass or aluminum.
- Depending on the design and the material, the hardhat is made to protect against certain hazards. Some protect the head from limited voltage or high voltage, while others provide no protection whatsoever from electrical shock. Some also protect from sparks, heat and burns to the head.
- Hardhats come in a variety of colors, including bright fluorescent colors for high visibility in traffic areas. They also come in different sizes.

Take care of your hardhat

- Get help from your supervisor in choosing the right hardhat for the particular hazards of your job. Get advice in properly fitting the hat.
- Adjust the hardhat for a comfortable fit, so you won’t be tempted to take it off. The suspension system must be adjusted to leave a space between the hard shell and your skull.
- Inspect your hardhat before each wearing. Check the shell for cracks, dents and other signs of damage or deterioration. Look for rips and other indications of excessive wear in the inner suspension system. Replace the hat if you find damage.
- If the hat has received a significant impact, replace it even if you cannot see damage. There may be hidden cracks which can affect the hat’s ability to protect you in the future.
- Do not alter your hardhat by painting it. This can change its ability to protect you from electrical shock. Don’t drill holes in it to put on accessories; instead, obtain a hat designed for use with accessories.
- Keep your hat away from extreme temperatures. Don’t carry it in the window of a vehicle or leave it outdoors in freezing weather.
- Don’t treat a hardhat roughly. Dropping it or throwing it can cause damage which will reduce the protection it provides.
- Wash your hardhat periodically with a mild soap and water. Do not use strong chemicals such as industrial solvents to clean a hardhat. You might damage the material and diminish its protective capabilities.

Final Word

Wear your hardhat at all times when you are working in a hazardous area. Your hat is useless sitting in the cab of your truck instead of on your head.