Protect Your Head From Injuries

It is of the utmost importance to protect yourself from head injuries.

We all have heard of people who have received head injuries and how their lives have been tragically changed.

If you have worn a hard hat for any amount of time, there is no doubt you can recall at least one incident where you have been spared even a slight injury by wearing it. It could have been a bolt that was accidentally kicked from an overhead walkway, or an overhead obstruction you simply have never noticed. But when it happened, it probably caught you by surprise.

Hard hats give protection from other dangers as well, low overhead obstructions, electric shock, dust and chemical spills.

That’s what your hard hat is for! It protects your head, usually when you are least expecting it to.

A hard hat has two main components for protection: The hard outer shell which intercepts things that are going to strike you, and the inner suspension system which absorbs the impact to further protect your head.

While the standard hard hat is the best known, there are actually many kinds of head protection available for different kinds of jobs.

Hard hats themselves come in a couple of different styles. One has a brim all the way around to better protect the head and neck. The other one has a brim at the front only and is made for working in smaller spaces.

There are also bump caps designed to protect your head in work areas where there are fewer dangers. Hard hats with attached hoods made of flexible material give added protection against dangers such as chemical splashes.

Some hard hats and protective head gear are designed for accessories such as ear muffs, communication ear phones and face shields.

No matter what kind of head protection is required for your job, there are two things required of you.

First, you have to wear it.

- A hard hat won’t do you any good if it’s left in your locker or behind the seat of your truck.

- If you are leaving it off because it is uncomfortable, keep looking for a better one until you get a good fit.

Second, you have to take care of it.

- That means keeping it clean by washing it with warm soapy water. Do not use solvents.
- Check the hat regularly for signs of wear. Look out for cracks in the shell or tears in the suspension.
- Don’t leave a hard hat in the sun, such as the back window of a vehicle. Leaving it there can also turn it into a dangerous projectile if you have to stop suddenly.
- Don’t stow items such as cards or letters inside your hat. This will cancel out its shock-absorbing capability.
- Don’t drill holes or etch your initials in it. If you have to mark your hat, use a permanent felt-tip marker.
- Retire your hat if it has been hit hard because it may have received unseen damage.
- If you have any doubts about how to care for your hat, check with your safety supervisor.

Remember to wear your head protection off-the-job too. This includes a hard hat for jobs such as weekend construction and woodcutting, and a helmet for sports such as hockey and cycling.