



# Toolbox Talks

## Hard Hats: When & Where

Often, use of hard hats has been required on many work sites since all hazards cannot be eliminated.

### OSHA Guidelines:

Protecting employees from potential head injuries is a key element of any safety program. A head injury can impair an employee for life or it can be fatal. Wearing a safety helmet or hard hat is one of the easiest ways to protect an employee's head from injury. Hard hats can protect employees from impact & penetration hazards as well as from electrical shock & burn hazards.

Employers must ensure that their employees wear head protection if any of the following apply aka **wear a hard hat when:**

- You're in an environment where objects might fall from above & strike you on the head.
- You might bump your heads against fixed objects, such as exposed pipes or beams.
- There is a possibility of accidental head contact with electrical hazards.

**Occupations** in which employees should be required to wear head protection include:

- construction workers
- carpenters
- electricians
- linemen
- plumbers & pipefitters
- timber & log cutters
- welders

among many others.

Whenever there is a danger of objects falling from above, such as working below others who are using tools or working under a conveyor belt, head protection must be worn.

In general, protective helmets or **hard hats should do the following:**

- Resist penetration by objects.
- Absorb the shock of a blow.
- Be water-resistant & slow burning.
- Have clear instructions explaining proper adjustment & replacement of the suspension & headband.

### General Guidelines to Follow:

1. Always wear hard hats when work is being performed over head, or where there is the possibility of being knocked in the head.
2. Always wear hard hats when working in tight spaces & under low hanging structures.
3. Hard hats should be worn properly to be effective.
4. Never wear baseball caps, knit caps, or hoodies under your hard hats.
5. Always inspect your hard hat before you put it on
6. **Inspect a hard hat when it is new & first put into use, prior to each day's use, & after an incident where the integrity has been challenged.** When inspecting a new hard hat, ensure that it is the proper hat for the job or the exposure to be expected, & make sure all parts are included with the hard hat. Also, follow the manufacturer's instructions to assemble or attach the parts & adjust the headband for proper fit; snug, but not tight.  
{When inspecting a hard hat prior to each day's use, look for gouges, cracks, deterioration, chalking or discoloration, flaking, suspension properly attached to the shell, all straps in good condition, & cleanliness, on both suspension & the shell.}
7. When a hard hat is damaged, replace the damaged part or replace the entire hard hat.

All information found on [www.safetytoolboxtalks.com](http://www.safetytoolboxtalks.com) & OSHA.gov