

Head Protection



National Safety Council



Head protection equipment

How Helmets Work

Safety headgear is intended to reduce the force of falling objects and electric shock when working near exposed electric lines or other electric conductors.

Some helmets are made so you can add other protection, such as goggles, hearing protection, face shields, welding hoods, etc.

Here's how safety helmets (often called hard hats) help prevent serious injury:

The hard shell resists and deflects the blow. It distributes the impact over a larger area. The helmet harness (or suspension) inside the helmet acts as a shock absorber. Even if the helmet dents or shatters, the harness still takes some force out of the blow.

Per OSHA (29 CFR 1910.135), all helmets shall comply with ANSI standard Z89.1, Safety Requirements for Industrial Head Protection.

Helmets are classified as Class A, B, or C.

Class A helmets reduce the impact of falling objects and reduce the danger of contact with exposed low-voltage conductors.

Class B helmets reduce the impact of falling objects and reduce the danger of contact with exposed high-voltage conductors.

Class C helmets reduce the impact of falling objects, *but they do not protect you from electric conductors.*

Bump Caps

A bump cap is not a helmet. Bump caps should never be used where Class A, B, or C protective helmets are required. Review OSHA and ANSI standards for additional requirements.

Helmet care

Your Checklist

- Make sure your helmet fits right. There should be approximately one inch between the harness and the shell so air can circulate and keep your scalp cool.
- If your helmet is too loose, it will fall off when you bend over. Too tight and it may cause headaches.
- Wear a color-coded helmet if you need identification. Don't paint your helmet to identify it.
- Add light-attracting tape to your helmet if you work at night or in darkness. This will make it easier for others to see you.
- Inspect your helmet every day. Look for gouges, dents, and cracks. Check for damaged or broken suspension/harness assembly and replace immediately.
- Always use the proper helmet, and only in the way it was designed to be used.
- Clean the shell of your helmet at least once a month to remove oil, grease, chemicals, and sweat. Soak it for five minutes in mild detergent and water that's at least 140 degrees Fahrenheit (60 degrees Centigrade). Then wipe the helmet and let the air dry it. Clean the helmet according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Take good care of your helmet; don't sit on it, drop it, throw it or drill holes in it.
- Sunlight and heat can rot the harness and straps. Don't leave your helmet on the front or back window ledge of your car.

Head safety tips

Wear a Helmet

Add whatever head protection you need, such as mask, face shield, goggles, hearing protection, etc.

Follow the rules

Work safely. Don't take chances.

Concentrate

Concentrate on what you're doing.

Report Head Injuries

All head injuries should be reported immediately to your supervisor.

Remember

Wearing a helmet is a status symbol. It says you think with your head and take good care of yourself.



Be smart. Protect your head against injury.