

## Hard Hats

If you work in construction, you have most likely been assigned a hard hat and have been told to wear it at specific times. These are good work rules that have been designed to comply with OSHA requirements and more importantly to help protect you when you are at work. While these rules are good, many hate wearing the hard hat or may not understand why hard hats must be worn in specific situations. Let's review a few situations where your employer may require the use of a hard hat and when OSHA states it must be worn.

People who work at large construction sites know that hard hats are necessary protection. They know this because they work in areas where others are working above them either on the floor above or on the roof. Debris falling from these elevated work areas or even materials dropping from a crane is an obvious exposure. When the obvious exposures are no longer present, some workers may assume that it is safe to remove their hard hat. As a result, many believe they can take their hard hat off with little or no risk. Unfortunately this can be a deadly mistake.

Another common project where hard hats may not be worn is on a road project. If there are no cranes or other overhead hazards like bridge work, many may wonder why you need to wear a hard hat. Remember, if there is a possible danger from flying debris or other hazards the hard hat must be worn. Many road projects have overhead hazards and flying debris that is presented by passing cars and trucks. As a result, these recognizable hazards require the use of the hard hat.

Typical excuses heard from a few workers have consisted of the following: "Hard hat falls off when I try to lift materials", or "It's too hot or uncomfortable". If your hard hat falls off when you attempt to lift something, consider that this may be a sign that you are lifting incorrectly by bending at the waist too much. This may also be an indication that the hard hat needs adjusting. Even though the hard hat feels too hot to wear, consider that it is offering you some comfort from the sun beating down on you.

The OSHA standard for hard hat use states that employees working in areas where there is a possible danger of head injury from impact, or from falling or flying objects, or from electrical shock and burns, shall be protected by protective helmets. The standard does not state that hard hats are necessary only when the hazard is obvious. It states that the hazard must only be possible. Therefore, if it is possible that you could be struck by falling debris, rigging blown by the wind, or even from ice falling off of the building, hard hats would be required.

Although the exposure for workers is not always obvious, you will not have enough time to put your hard hat on when the incident occurs. By the time you even think about reaching for your hard hat lying there in the mud or in the cab of the truck it will be too late. The only way it can protect you is by consistently wearing it.

Remember, job sites require work crews and visitors to always wear their hard hats. Consistently wearing the hard hat on these sites may prevent a significant injury by deflecting the material away from your head. When it comes to wearing hard hats, follow your company procedures.

### Attendees:

_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Location:**

**Supervisor:**

**Date:**

_____	_____	_____
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