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Head Protection

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Supervising Safety Newsletter

Throwing on a hard hat when not in the office, control room, lunchroom, vehicles, or a parking lot is a great habit to get into. It is also important to know why hard hats are important and the protection they provide.

OSHA Standard 1910.135(a)(1) requires employers to ensure that each affected employee wears a protective helmet when working in areas where there is a potential for injury to the head from falling objects. However, this is not all that hard hats protect us from.

Hard hats provide protection from:

- Falling objects or items that could potentially fall from heights above such as parts, tools, packages, boxes, and other stored or racked materials.
- Flying objects or particles from cutting, conveyor, or grinding operations.
- Moving parts, pieces, or objects being handled by overhead lifting equipment such as gantry cranes.
- Contact with electrical lines, wires, or energized parts.
- Environments with low overhead or fixed objects like piping, beams, pallet racks, or heavy equipment, or inside confined spaces where a worker has the potential to bump his/her head.

It is IPSC's policy that if an employee is not in an office area, a control room, lunchroom, electrical communications and battery room, vehicle, lab, or parking lot, then hard hats must be worn. The nature of work may also require an employee to wear his/her hard hat in the above mentioned areas.

Hard hats must be worn correctly in order to be effective. Manufacturer's instructions for proper fitting procedures must be followed.

- Do not store hard hats in direct sunlight. Sunlight and extreme heat can cause the hard hat to degrade faster.
- Do not intentionally drop or throw hard hats or use

them as supports. The damage can adversely affect the level of protection.

- Do not alter or modify a hard hat to add accessories.
- Do not paint or cover up damage to hard hat with stickers.

If your hard hat has been compromised replace it as soon as possible with a new one.

OSHA Standard 1910.135(b)(1)(i) states head protection must comply with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z89.1-2009.

Hard hats at IPSC must have a Class E rating, which provides protection from electrical hazards.

Hard hats are engineered to keep a designed distance between the hard hat shell and the worker's head. It is important to not add any accessories or liners that are not approved by the manufacturer or compatible with the helmet. OSHA recommends that employers permit only liners that are specifically designed to be compatible with the protective properties of the hard hat. For example, baseball caps should not be worn underneath hard hats.

At IPSC there are several different types of hard hats. Find one that fits comfortably and use it faithfully while working and in all designated hard hat areas.

