



# HARD HAT BASIC SAFETY

Hard Hats protect workers heads against falling objects, fixed or protruding objects, inadvertent contact with electricity, exposure to UV, weather, and extremes of temperature.

Always work according to the manufacturers guidelines.

## Choosing the Right Hard Hat for the Job

Hard hats come in a range of styles to suit all types of work:

- › Industrial – for use in construction, factories and quarries
- › High temperature – for use in processes such as steel and glass manufacturing
- › Bushfire fighting – for use by emergency personnel for combating bush fires.
- › Peakless – allows clear upward vision
- › Peaked – provides shade for the eyes and facial protection
- › Full brim – provides fuller protection from falling objects and UV as well as water shedding

Some hard hats allow for the attachment of accessories to add further protection such as face shields, respirators, hearing protection and work lamps.

When selecting your hard hat you should also consider whether ventilation or hi-viz colouring is of benefit.

## How Hard Hats Work

Hard hats are made of a hard outer shell designed to take the initial impact, and an inner harness designed to absorb and spread this impact which minimises the effects of the force to the skull.

## Wearing Your Hard Hat Correctly

- › Adjust the harness cradle to ensure comfort and total contact with your head at all times.
- › It is recommended you do not wear clothing items on your head as this will result in the harness cradle becoming ineffective. This includes hoods, baseball caps, thickly woven or heavily seamed beanies or balaclavas. Some hairstyles such as dreadlocks are also not recommended. As an alternative, safety clothing distributors offer seamless polypropylene beanies which do not interfere with the performance of the harness cradle.
- › To secure your hard hat, you can use the elastic chin straps, or a four point retaining strap integrated with a harness when working at height.
- › Ensure any attachments are compatible with the make and model of the hard hat.

## Looking After Your Hard Hat

- › Store in a cool, dry environment, away from direct sunlight, heavy or sharp objects
- › Keep away from chemicals including paints and thinners, solvent based adhesives (some stickers) and cleaning agents
- › Clean by scrubbing and immersing in warm soapy water, and rinsing in clean warm water
- › Sweat bands must be regularly replaced as required
- › If the hat loses its glossy finish and appears chalky, the shell must be replaced

## The Safety Check

All hard hat components should be inspected weekly for signs of dents, cracks, penetration and damage due to impact, rough treatment or wear.

A simple test is to squeeze the sides of the hard hat together and listen and feel for signs of stress or cracking which would indicate brittleness and deterioration.

Field tests have shown helmet shells last for three years from the issue date. Components of harnesses may deteriorate more rapidly in service and may need to be replaced at two year intervals.

## Training

Employers are responsible for ensuring workers are trained in the safe use, care and maintenance of hard hats. This training should include:

- › The hazards controlled by hard at use
- › How the hard hat works
- › Limitations of hard hats
- › When hard hats must be worn
- › How to wear a hard hat correctly
- › How to adjust the hard hat for comfort and fit
- › How to correctly store a hard hat
- › How to identify signs of wear or damage
- › How to clean and maintain their hard hat