Excuses Won’t Protect Your Head

WHAT’S AT STAKE

When it comes to personal protective equipment, your hardhat is as vital as every other piece of PPE you wear. You wouldn’t decide to finish framing a house in bare feet because your safety boots were feeling heavy. Nor would you so easily discard your gloves if you were performing a job that required hand protection. Taking off your hardhat makes your head vulnerable to many life-altering injuries.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Recent statistics indicate that only 16 percent of workers who suffered head injuries were wearing hardhats. Why do so many workers decide that protecting their head isn’t a priority and take off their hardhat? There are a variety of reasons why. Some are excuses we have all heard before andmay have even used on occasion. Here are a few:

- A hardhat is clumsy.
- It doesn’t fit properly.
- It gets in the way.
- It’s too hot.

Some workers have said that they were only passing through a hardhat zone and it didn’t really matter. One-third of all head injuries are from falling objects that have struck the head.

EXAMPLE
A plumber working at a construction site was killed when a skid-steer loader tipped forward and hit him on the head. Despite 20 years’ experience, the man was not wearing a hardhat. The victim was in a trench which his co-worker was backfilling with the skid loader. The ground was damp and soft, and as the loader approached the edge of the trench, it shifted, fell forward and hit the plumber on the head.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Choose the right hardhat for the job. It has to comply with standards. There are many different hardhats available, designed to protect you against many hazards. Most kinds of hardhats have an inner suspension system that serves as a shock absorber, and a hard outer shell to protect you from impact.
- Ensure that your hardhat is comfortable and doesn’t hinder you from performing your job. Discomfort can tempt you to take off your hardhat. Having the right fit is also required if you are to receive full protection.
- If you are having problems with fit and comfort, don’t just grumble about it during and after your shift; talk with your supervisor about it. He or she may be able to help you find a better fitting hardhat that will still provide the protection you need.

FINAL WORD

There are probably lots of poor excuses not to wear your hardhat. The most obvious reason to wear it is to protect yourself from devastating injuries.