



Construction Industry Protective Equipment Fact Sheet

PPE - Hard Hat, 29 CFR 1926.100

1926.100(a): “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.”

Employer Compliance – OSHA does not list the specific requirements in regards to type, wear, or replacement in this standard. The obligation is placed on the employer to meet the specifications found in the ANSI Z89.1 consensus standard. Currently, employers must meet the specifications of the 1997, 2004, or 2009 version. (The 2014 version of Z89.1 is available but has not been added to 1926.100.)

Hard Hat Types

Type 1: Reduces the force of impact from a blow to the top of the head.

Type 2: Reduces the force of impact from a blow off-center, from the side, or the top of the head.

Hard Hats Classes (based on the electrical protection they provide)

Class G (general): Rated for 2,200 volts.

Class E (electrical): Rated for 20,000 volts.

Class C (conductive): No electrical protection.

Inspection

Although hard hats do not have a set expiration date, service life guidelines are provided with the hard hat. The hard hat and all components need daily inspection by the employee for damage such as dents, wear, or cracks. Any damage reduces the protection levels of the hat. With plastic hats, UV light degrades the plastic over time. Replacement is needed when the hat fails to maintain shape after being compressed laterally or the shell degrades the plastic: usually giving a dull, chalky, sometimes flaky appearance.

Non-mandatory Features Available

- **Reverse Donning:** A  symbol means the hat can be worn frontward or backward if done according to the manufacturer’s instructions, and that the testing requirements have been met for frontward/backward wearing.
- **Lower temperature:** An “LT” mark meets all the testing requirements when preconditioned to -22°F (-30°C).
- **High Visibility:** An “HV” mark meets all requirements for high visibility and is tested for chromaticity and luminescence.
- **Higher Temperature (2014 Version):** An “HT” mark meets all the testing requirements when preconditioned to 140°F with a 3.6°F variance (60°C +/- 2°C).