You’re Not Hard-headed Enough



Safety Talk

“Get this through your thick skull.”
or
“You’re a hard-headed person.”

You’ve probably heard these expressions – maybe even used them yourself a time or two – but the fact is a human skull isn’t all that thick or all that hard when compared to some of the hazards in the workplace.

Fatal and disabling head injuries happen when people get hit in the head with running equipment, tools falling from above, broken machine parts projected through the air and many other moving and stationary objects.

A hardhat provides protection against hazards such as these. It is designed to provide a barrier and absorb shock, to prevent your brain from being injured. Even a minor brain injury can change your life, making it difficult to cope with physical, mental and emotional challenges.

Here are some things you should know about hardhats:

- Hardhats made of certain materials also provide some protection against electrical hazards, as well as dusts and mists in the air. Specially-designed hardhats have brackets to attach earmuffs for hearing protection and faceshields. Other hardhats are made to be worn with liners to provide protection from the cold.
- Hardhats are made in two distinct parts. The first is the hard outer shell. It protects against impact and penetration, preventing objects from striking your head. The second is the inner suspension system. It is a series of straps that maintain a space between your head and the hardhat. This system absorbs the shock of impact to prevent head injury. Suspension systems are not interchangeable with headgear from different manufacturers.

Here are some tips for using and taking care of your hardhat:

- Get help from your safety supervisor in choosing the right hardhat for the particular hazards of your job. Get advice in properly fitting the hat.
- Adjust the hardhat for a comfortable fit, so you won’t be tempted to take it off. The suspension system must be adjusted to leave a space between the hard shell and your skull.
- Inspect your hardhat before each wearing. Check the shell for cracks, dents and

other signs of damage or wear. Look for rips and other indications of excessive wear in the inner suspension system.
- Never drill holes in your hardhat or alter it in any other way. Even painting it can destroy its protective capabilities.
- Keep your hat away from extreme temperatures. Don’t carry it in the window of a vehicle or leave it outdoors in freezing weather.
- Wash your hardhat once in awhile with a mild soap and water. Do not use strong chemicals such as industrial solvents to clean a hardhat. You might damage the material and diminish the protective capabilities.

Wear your hardhat at all times when you are working in a hazardous area. Your hat is useless sitting in the cab of your truck instead of on your head. Being hard-headed means you have a mind of your own. Wear your hardhat and keep it.