

HEAD PROTECTION

IDENTIFY

In construction, a hard hat is a critical piece of personal protection. It is the last line of defence against objects impacting one of your most vital assets — your head. If your hard hat is not in good condition or used properly, the consequences could be tragic.

COMMUNICATE AND CONTROL

If there is a foreseeable danger of injury to a worker's head at a worksite, the employer must ensure that the worker wears head protection that complies with the CSA Standards (CSA Z94.1-05). A hard hat is required to be worn on all construction sites.

Most head protection is made up of two parts:

- The shell (light and rigid to deflect blows)
- The suspension (to absorb and distribute the energy of the blow)

Both parts of the headwear must be compatible and maintained according to the manufacturer's guidelines. If attachments are used with headwear, such as earmuffs or face shields, they must be designed specifically for use with the headwear.

It is important to keep your hard hat clean and free of solvents, adhesives, grease, and oil. Leaving your hard hat on a dashboard of a vehicle where the heat from the sun may be intensified as it passes through the glass, or on top of a heat register, could compromise the strength of the hard hat.

CSA International advises against applying stickers, other than construction orientation stickers, to the hard hat for these reasons:

- The adhesive on many stickers may react with the plastic and degrade the strength of the shell.
- Metallic stickers may pose a special problem. They may conduct radiant heat from the sun creating a "hot spot" which could also weaken the plastic.
- Stickers themselves may hide damage such as cracks, or weaknesses in the shell.

The usual maintenance for headgear is simply washing with a mild detergent and rinsing thoroughly.

FACTS AND TIPS

The following are the **dos** of head protection:

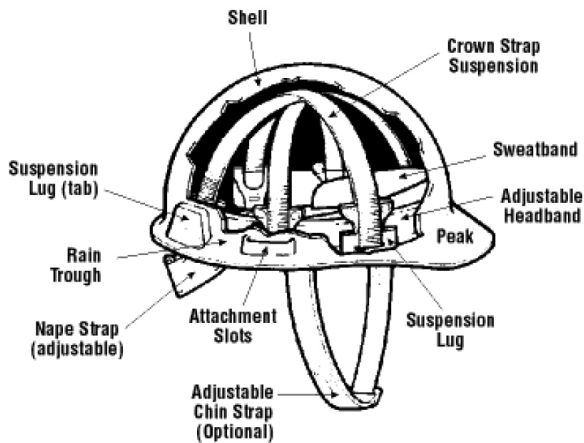
- Replace headgear that is pitted, holed, cracked or brittle.
- Replace headgear that has been subjected to a blow, even though damage cannot be seen.
- Remove from service any headgear if its serviceability is in doubt.
- Replace headgear and components according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Consult regulations or your supplier for information on headgear.

The following are the **don'ts** of head protection:

- Drill, remove peaks, alter the shell or suspension in any way.
- Use solvents or paints on the shell as it will break down the integrity of the shell.
- Put chin straps over the brims of certain classes of headgear.
- Carry anything in the hard hat while wearing the hard hat.
- Wear winter toques or other items not approved by the manufacturer that will alter the proper fit and protection.

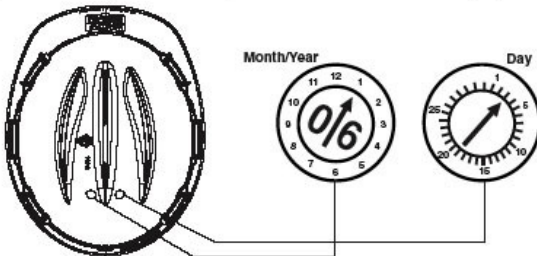
FACTS AND TIPS

When should a hard hat be replaced? The effective life of a hard hat varies with the make and model. Each manufacturer is supposed to provide this information on or with each hard hat sold. They advise that once the hardhat has exceeded its effective life, it should be replaced. If the hard hat has been subjected to a heavy blow or has been stressed by being run over or compressed, it must be replaced.

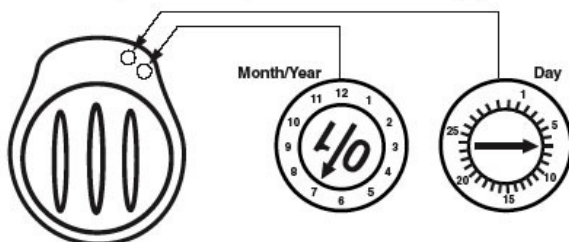


Each hard hat will have a stamp date of manufacture. The typical effective life of a hard hat is five years. But again, that may differ. It is recommended to review the manufacturer guidelines.

Location #1: This example shows a cap that was molded on January 3, 2006.



Location #2: This example shows a cap that was molded on July 7, 2001.



THE QUIZ

- Hard hats should be replaced after three years:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- Hard hats should fit snugly on the worker's head?
YES _____ NO _____
- List three components of a hard hat:
a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
- Hard hats must be worn on all construction projects:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- Hard hats can have all types of stickers on them:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- List two common accessories used on hard hats:
a) _____
b) _____
- Check the manufacturer date of your hard hat. Does it need to be replaced?

ANSWERS:
1. FALSE; 2. YES; 3. Shell, suspension straps, brim, headband, suspension lug, and/or chin strap; 4. TRUE; 5. FALSE; 6. Earmuffs and face shields; 7. Site-specific answer, based on stamped date