

SUBJECT: Hard Hats Used in Construction and General Industry

Purpose: To clarify the requirements for the use of protective headgear (hard hats).

Scope: This instruction applies MNOSHA-wide.

References: 1926.100 "Head Protection"
1926.28(a) "Personal Protective Equipment"
1910.135 "Occupational Head Protection"
1910.132(a) "Personal Protective Equipment"
ANSI Z89.1-1969 Safety Requirements for Industrial Head Protection
ANSI Z89.1-1986 Protective Headware for Industrial Workers
ANSI Z89.1 – 2009 American National Standard for Industrial Head Protection

Cancellation: This directive supercedes: MNOSHA INSTRUCTION STD 3-3.2, dated September 21, 2009.

Background:

Requirements for the use of hard hats in construction and general industry are covered by the above-referenced standards. Hard hats are required when employees are working where there is a possible danger of head injury from impact, and or from falling objects, or from electrical shock and burns. We can only cite these standards where there is a hazard that may cause head injury.

OSHA General Industry Standard 1910.135 was amended in 1994 to require hard hats purchased prior to July 5, 1994 to meet the ANSI Z89.1-1969 specifications and those purchased after July 5, 1994 to meet the ANSI Z89.1-1986 specifications. The Construction Standard 1926.100 requires hard hats to meet the ANSI Z89.1-1969 specifications. The ANSI standard was also revised in 1997, 2003, and 2009.

Action:

A. CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Providing and Enforcing the Use of Hard Hats. When employees are working on an active jobsite and they are observed being exposed to head injury hazards, the appropriate employer shall be cited under 1926.100(a) and 1926.28(a) (there is a single grouped save for this item) for failing to provide and enforce the use of hard hats.

B. GENERAL INDUSTRY

Providing and Enforcing the Use of Hard Hats. When employees are observed being exposed to head injury hazards, the employer shall be cited under 1910.135(a)(1) for failing to provide and enforce the use of hard hats. Citations may also be proposed under 1910.132 (d), (e), and/or (f) as appropriate.

C. GENERAL INDUSTRY AND CONSTRUCTION

1. Employees working in areas where there are no head injury hazards do not need to wear a hard hat. They must have a hard hat available to wear if, in the course of their work, they will enter an area where head injury hazards do exist.
2. Equipment operators are not required to wear hard hats if they have overhead protection. Equipment operators must wear hard hats if they leave their vehicle and pass through an area where head injury hazards exist.

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3. The hard hat requirements may be relaxed during normal coffee breaks and lunch periods if all work ceases and the hazards of possible head injury are no longer present.
4. Maintenance of Hard Hats. Hard hats should be inspected daily for defects. If a hard hat has been subjected to a hard blow or some other damage has occurred, cite the appropriate standard if the hard hat fails to meet the requirements in ANSI Z89.1-1969 (Construction) or ANSI Z89.1-1986 (General Industry).

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For the MNOSHA Management Team

Distribution: OSHA Compliance and WSC Director

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