



# HARD HAT SAFETY

## TOOLBOX TALK: Hard Hat Safety & ANSI Z89.1 Requirements

*RATTLIR Safety Series – “Strike Before It Bites”*

### Purpose

Hard hats provide critical protection from falling objects, flying debris, electrical hazards, and impact forces. This toolbox talk explains ANSI Z89.1 classifications, inspection requirements, and proper use to ensure all RATTLIR personnel remain protected in the field.





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## ANSI Z89.1 Hard Hat Classifications

Types (Impact Protection):

- Type I: Protects against impacts from above.
- Type II: Protects against impacts from above and from the sides.

Classes (Electrical Protection):

- Class G – General: Tested to 2,200 volts.
- Class E – Electrical: Tested to 20,000 volts.
- Class C – Conductive: No electrical protection; designed for ventilation and comfort.

All hard hats must be labeled inside with ANSI Z89.1 compliance information.

## Common Head Hazards

- Falling tools, parts, or debris.
- Low overhead clearance or structural protrusions.
- Electrical conductors and energized equipment.
- Struck-by hazards from vehicles or machinery.
- Weather-related risks such as sun exposure or heat buildup.

## Inspection & Maintenance Requirements

- Inspect hard hats at the start of each shift.
- Look for cracks, dents, UV damage, brittleness, or deformation.
- Inspect suspension system for frayed straps, stretching, or broken connectors.
- Replace the suspension every 12 months or sooner if damaged.
- Replace the hard hat shell every 5 years (or sooner for heavy sun exposure).
- Never paint or drill into hard hats—chemicals can weaken the shell.
- Store them away from heat sources or direct sunlight.

## Proper Use of Hard Hats

- Wear hard hats level on the head with the bill facing forward.



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- Do not wear hoodies, thick beanies, or bulky items underneath—they reduce protection.
- Use only manufacturer-approved winter liners if needed.
- Ensure chin straps are used in high-wind or climbing situations.
- Do not hang hard hats on equipment or use them to carry objects.

## Emergency Response

- If struck in the head: stop work immediately and assess for injury.
- Seek medical evaluation for any pain, dizziness, or visual disturbance.
- Replace any hard hat involved in an impact – even if no damage is visible.
- Document and report the incident.

## Discussion Questions

- Is your hard hat ANSI Z89.1 compliant and in good condition?
- Do today's tasks require Type I, Type II, Class G, Class E, or Class C protection?
- Are workers exposed to overhead or electrical hazards today?

## RATTLIR Takeaway

Your hard hat is one of the simplest and most effective pieces of PPE. Keeping it in good condition and wearing the correct ANSI-rated model ensures you strike before it bites.