# PART II

# SAFETY

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Office of Communications
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www.osha.gov
For Immediate Release

# OSHA announces switch from traditional hard hats to safety helmets to protect agency employees from head injuries better

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced that the agency is replacing traditional hard hats used by its employees with more modern safety helmets to protect them better when they are on inspection sites.

In 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports head injuries accounted for nearly 6 percent of non-fatal occupational injuries involving days away from work. Almost half of those injuries occurred when workers came in contact with an object or equipment while about 20 percent were caused by slips, trips and falls.

Dating back to the 1960s, traditional hard hats protect the top of a worker's head but have minimal side impact protection and also lack chin straps. Without the straps, tradition hard hats can fall off a worker's head if they slip or trip, leaving them unprotected. In addition, traditional hard hats lacked vents and trapped heat inside.

On Nov. 22, 2023, OSHA published a Safety and Health Information Bulletin detailing key differences between traditional hard hats and more modern safety helmets and the advancements in design, materials and other features that help protect workers' entire heads better. Today's safety helmets may also offer face shields or goggles to protect against projectiles, dust and chemical splashes. Others offer built-in hearing protection and/or communication systems to enable clear communication in noisy environments.

The agency recommends safety helmets be used by people working at construction industry and the oil and gas industry; in high-temperature, specialized work and low-risk environments; performing tasks involving electrical work and working from heights; and when required by regulations or industry standards.

OSHA wants employers to make safety and health a core value in their workplaces and is committed to doing the same by leading by example and embracing the evolution of head protection.

Learn more about OSHA.

**Introduction**

OSHA regulates head protection for general industry, construction, and maritime and requires employers to ensure affected workers wear appropriate head protection. This Safety and Health Information Bullet in (SHIB) provides information for employers and employees when selecting PPE for head protection. This SHIB also provides instructions for properly inspecting and storing head protection. With a thorough understanding of the benefits and capabilities of head protect ion options, employers and workers can make informed decisions on selection and use.

**Background**

Proper head protection is crucial in work environments with falling objects, struck-by, overhead electrical hazards, and risks from slips, trips, and falls. Both scientific understanding of head injuries and head protection technology continues to advance. Modern head protection, whether it's a safety helmet or a hard hat, varies in styles and levels of protection, allowing employers and workers to choose head protect ion appropriate for the job. OSHA's head protection standards state that there can be compliance through ANSI Z89.1-2009, 2003, and 1997: published by the International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA). The range of products available today allows employers and employees to select the right type of head protection for the job, comply with the requirements of all OSHA standards (general industry, construct ion, maritime), and obtain optimum head protection.

Two Types (impact) and three Classes (electrical) of head protection are recognized. Type I head protection offers protection from blows to the top of the head. Type II head protection offers protection from blows to the top and sides of the head. Class G (General) head protection is designed to reduce exposure to low voltage conductors and are proof tested at 2,200 volts (phase to ground).

Class E (Electrical) head protection is designed to reduce exposure to higher voltage conductors and are proof tested at 20,000 volts (phase to ground). Class C (Conductive) head protection is not intended to provide protection against contact with electrical hazards.

ANSI/ISEA Z89.1-compliant head protection, including safety helmets and hard hats, are manufactured using a wide range of materials from high density polyethylene to glass reinforced nylon. Some hard hats and safety helmets incorporate advanced energy re-distribution solutions that reduce rotational forces of certain impacts and distribute impact energy throughout the headwear to help reduce brain trauma.

Chin straps are recognized as an effective way to keep head protection on when working in awkward positions or when experiencing a slip or fall and should be considered for use with all head protection.

Manufactures offer an array of product-specific approved optional features designed to address specific workplace hazards. Accessories can include add-on face shields or goggles, to protect against projectiles, dust, and chemical splashes, and hearing protection and communication systems. In addition, impact indicator technology can be mounted on protective headwear for concussion awareness. However, head protection with integrated technology may not be suitable for some workplaces.

Choosing the right head protection Employers must conduct a hazard assessment at their job site and based on the workplace hazards determine whether head protect ion is necessary and if so, the most appropriate type. Safety Helmets for OSHA After a general Job Hazard Analysis of its work and a thorough evaluation of head protect ion options, OSHA determined Type II, Class G safety helmets were the most appropriate form of head protection for its employees. The Agency recognizes that based on their own Job Hazard Analysis, employers and workers may decide that another form of head protection is for them. Considerations when selecting head protection.

Construction Sites. For construction sites, especially those with high risks of falling objects and debris, impacts from equipment, awkward working positions, and/or slip, trip, and fall hazards: consider Type II head protection with chin straps.

Oil and Gas Industry. For oil and gas industry worksites where workers face multiple hazards, including potential exposure to chemicals and severe impacts: consider Type II head protection with integrated eye and face protection, like face shields and googles.

Working from Heights. For tasks or jobs that involve working from heights: consider head protection with chin straps to prevent the head protection from falling off.

Electrical Work. For tasks involving electrical work or proximity to electrical hazards, head protection with nonconductive materials (Class G and Class E) provide protection to prevent electrical shocks.

**NOTE – Vented hard hats or safety helmets cannot be used for electrical work.**

High visibility. High visibility head protection is marked “HV” on the label. HV head protection helps workers be seen on jobsites like construction and road work. Specialized Work Environments. For jobs that require integrated face shields, hearing protection or communication devices, employers should consider protective headwear that allows for these manufacturer compatible safety features.

Properly storing and evaluating head protection

Always refer to the manufacturer’s specific guidelines for head protection care, use, and storage. As a general rule:

1. Inspect the outer shell for cracks, dents, or other signs of damage. Run your fingers over the surface to check for any irregularities.
2. Examine the suspension system (headband and chin strap) for wear and tear, ensuring it is securely attached to the shell and free from damage, and inspect interior cushioning for wear or compression, if applicable. If there are any signs of deterioration, contact the manufacturer for replacement options.
3. Check for labels and certification marks. Look for labels and certification marks inside the head protection. These indicate that the head protection meets the necessary safety standards and requirements. Check that the labels are legible and not tampered with. Note: only head protection having a reverse-wearing label or mark can be worn in reverse.
4. 4. Examine accessories and attachments. If head protection has manufacturer approved accessories or attachments (face shields, goggles, earmuffs, etc.), inspect them for damage or signs of wear. Make sure they are securely fastened to the head protect ion and are functioning correctly.

5. Check for proper fit. Before using head protection, ensure it fits comfortably and securely. Adjust the suspension system to achieve a snug fit without excessive pressure points. Head protection should not be too loose or too tight.

6. Refer to the manufacturer's guidelines for recommended lifespan or guidance on when to take head protection out of service. The service-life of head protection depends on many factors including storage, handling, use, and exposure to harsh environments including UV Rays. Any hard hat or helmet should be discarded when it is impacted or if there are any signs of damage or degradation.

7. Clean and dry head protection before storing. After each use, clean the exterior of head protection with mild soap and water. Ensure no dirt, debris, or chemicals are present that could compromise the head protection’s structural integrity. Once cleaned, allow the head protection to air-dry. Avoid exposing head protection to direct sunlight, extreme temperatures, or chemicals during storage. Do not store your head protection in your car or where it may be exposed to direct sunlight or extreme temperatures.

8. Impact damage. If head protection has experienced an impact or has been subjected to a significant force, retire it immediately, even if there is no visible damage. Head protection is designed for singleuse impact protection and may not retain its full effectiveness after an incident.

9. Keep Records: Maintain a record of each inspection, noting the date, any findings, and actions taken. Document the date of purchase and any relevant information about the head protection to track its lifespan. This is recommended for all personal protective equipment.

Suicide Prevention in Construction

# 5 Things You Should Know

# The Stats are crazy!!!

# Suicide

Suicide can touch anyone, anywhere, at any time. But it is not inevitable. Help is available. According to the CDC• More than 12 million adults seriously think about suicide each year. • More than 3 million adults make a plan to commit suicide each year. • More than 1 million adults attempt suicide each year. • More than 48,000 people die by suicide in the United States each year.

People of any age, sex, and background can have thoughts of suicide. Untreated mental health conditions can lead to these thoughts and even suicidal actions. That is why it is important to provide resources and encourage people to get help when they are having mental health concerns, experiencing traumatic events, or battling substance use disorders.

The construction industry has one of the highest suicide rates of any occupation. Suicide deeply impacts workers, families, and communities. Fortunately, like other workplace fatalities, suicides can be prevented. Everyone in the construction industry has a role to play in suicide prevention. Following are 5 things to know about preventing suicide.

# BE AWARE

## Everyone can help prevent loss by suicide.

Mental health and suicide can be difficult to talk about—especially with work colleagues—but your actions can make a difference. When you work closely with others, you may sense when something is wrong.

# PAY ATTENTION

Know the warning signs of suicide. There is no single cause for suicide but there are warning signs. Changes in behavior, mood, social media posts, or even what they say may signal someone is at risk. Take these signs seriously. It could save a life.

# Reach Out

Ask “Are you okay?”

If you are concerned about a coworker, talk with them privately, be compassionate, and listen without judgment. Encourage them to reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Member Assistance Program (MAP), the huuman resources (HR) department, or a mental health professional.

# TAKE ACTION

If someone is in crisis, stay with them and get help. If you believe a coworker is at immediate risk of suicide, stay with them until you can get further help. Contact emergency services or the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

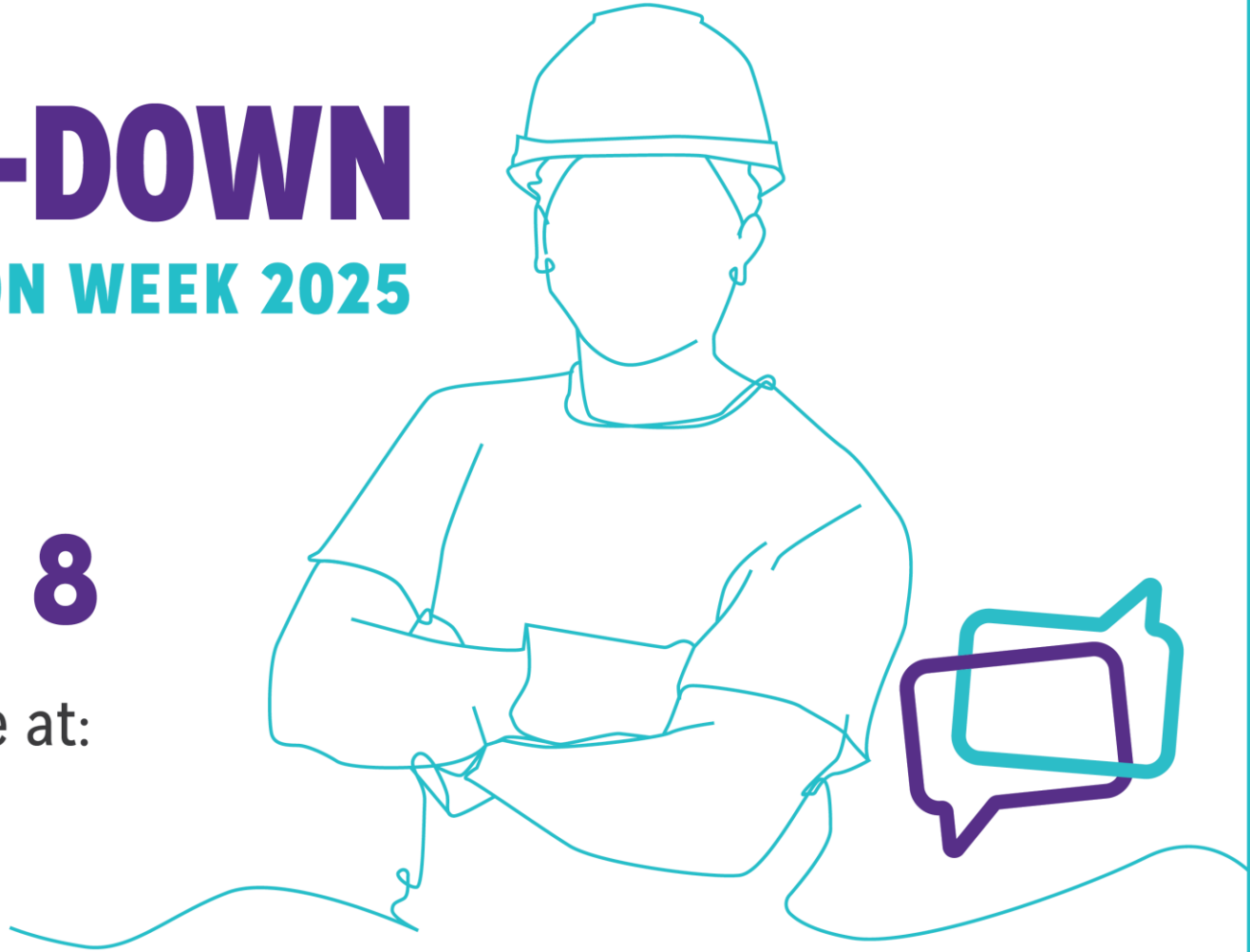
# LEARN MORE

## Suicide prevention resources are available.

- Call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988.
- Visit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention website (www.afsp.org) and the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention website (www.preventconstructionsuicide.com) to learn more about suicide risk factors, warning signs, and what you can do to help prevent suicide.
- Visit OSHA's website (www.osha.gov/preventingsuicides).

# NATIONAL STAND-DOWN

## CONSTRUCTION SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK 2025



## Monday, Sept. 8

Join us for a moment of silence at:
2:50 p.m. Eastern
1:50 p.m. Central
12:50 p.m. Mountain
11:50 a.m. Pacific
10:50 a.m. Alaska
8:50 a.m. Hawaii

**CONSTRUCTION SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK**

ConstructionSuicidePrevention.com

# Substance Use Disorder

Substance use disorder is a persistent desire for substances even in the face of negative consequences. Some people come to rely on opioids, stimulants, alcohol, or other substances even when the substances cause harm. People may develop a dependence on drugs, including prescription medications, and alcohol for many reasons, including the presence of other mental health conditions, chronic pain, or injuries. Regardless of the underlying reason, substance use disorder can be treated and controlled.