

OSHA Employees Will Now Wear Safety Helmets

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On December 11, 2023, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced that its employees would now be using safety helmets in place of traditional hard hats when inspecting employer establishments. According to OSHA, these safety helmets incorporate newer designs and are an improvement over hard hats.

OSHA's announcement is consistent with its ongoing efforts to update personal protective equipment requirements. In a recent Safety and Health Information Bulletin, OSHA highlighted that newer safety helmets may be lighter in weight, more comfortable, and less likely to fall off or slip. OSHA also noted that the Bureau of Labor Statistics found in 2020 that 6% of "non-fatal occupational injuries" involving time off work stemmed from head injuries. Presumably, OSHA's roll out of safety helmets is intended to lead by example and to spark discussion among workers who may see a compliance officer in a helmet and not a hard hat.

OSHA recommends safety helmets for the construction industry and the oil and gas industry; while working in high-temperature, specialized work and low-risk environments; or while performing tasks involving electrical work and working from heights. Employers who are considering making a change in head protection should ensure that safety helmets comply with the American National Standards Institute Z89.1 standard for hard hats referenced in either 29 CFR § 1910.135 or 29 CFR § 1926.100.

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Practice Areas

Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA)