

WASHINGTON STATE LOGGER SAFETY INITIATIVE

Keeping Washington loggers safe.

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A simple hard hat could save your life

At a logging site or cutting unit, the hard hat ranks near the top for personal protective equipment. The prevention of head injuries is an important factor in every safety program. A single head injury can handicap an employee for life, or it can be fatal. By wearing and ensuring that hard hats are in good condition, many loggers and cutters have been shielded from these tragic events.

Today's conventional hard hat consists of two engineered components, the outer shell and the suspension system. The outer shell resists and deflects blows to the head and the suspension system acts as a shock absorber.

Head Protection Program

An effective head protection program:

- Includes routine hard hat inspections, ensuring the hats are maintained and used per the manufacturer's requirements.
- Ensures hard hats are immediately removed from service and replaced when showing signs of worn or damaged components that are not within the manufacturer's specifications.
- Inspects the shell routinely for:
 - Dents, cracks, nicks, gouges and
 - Any damage due to impact including:
 - Penetration, abrasions
 - Rough treatment (including rigging fits) or
 - Wear that might reduce the degree of protection originally provided.

Also, most hard hats are susceptible to ultraviolet light damage, temperature extremes and chemical degradation. This will be apparent when the shell becomes stiff, brittle, faded, and no longer glossy or it takes on a chalky appearance.

Hard Hat Suspension System

The suspension system, including the attachment components must be inspected and replaced periodically. Over a period of time, the suspension will become worn and may become damaged.

- The hard hat suspension should be inspected closely for cracks, frayed or cut crown straps, torn headband or size adjustment slots, loss of pliability or other signs of wear. These conditions can be caused by perspiration, hair oils or normal wear.
- Any suspension that is damaged must be removed from service and replaced immediately. Most hard hat manufacturers recommend replacing the entire suspension system every 12 months.