

Personal protective equipment: Safety helmets

Safety helmets are essential for keeping workers safe from head injuries on the job.

Whether it's falling objects, electrical hazards, extreme heat, or dangerous substances, they offer vital protection. Designed to absorb shock, resist chemicals, handle heat, and provide insulation, these helmets are built to safeguard you from everyday risks.

Types of safety helmets

- **Type 1:** Reduces the impact of blows to the top of your head, featuring a full brim for added coverage
- **Type 2:** Protects against impacts to the sides of your head
- **Class G (general):** The most commonly used safety helmet, providing protection against electrical exposure up to 2,200 volts
- **Class E (electrical):** Offers stronger protection, capable of withstanding up to 20,000 volts for high-risk environments
- **Class C:** Provides no electrical protection but includes ventilation, making it ideal for hot conditions like factories and construction sites

Key safety tips

- Always wear your safety helmet with the bill facing forward
- Ensure you have the right safety helmet for the job and the environment
- Adjust the straps for a snug fit—loose helmets won't protect you properly

- Check for cracks, dents, or wear and tear regularly and report any damage
- Don't wear anything under your safety helmet that could affect its fit
- Never paint your safety helmet—some paints can weaken its protective properties
- Don't store or place objects between the suspension and shell of the helmet

Consequences of not wearing head protection

Not wearing proper head protection can lead to severe injuries and other significant consequences:

- **OSHA fines:** Failing to comply with safety standards can result in steep penalties, with fines exceeding \$100,000 for serious violations
- **Head injuries:** Without protection, head injuries from falls or impacts can lead to permanent damage or even death
- **Secondary injuries:** Head trauma can cause additional issues like neck injuries or paralysis
- **Financial strain:** Injuries often result in costly medical bills, legal claims, and lost wages
- **Reputation damage:** Employers may face reputational harm, business disruptions, and potential closure due to safety violations
- **Heat stress:** In hot environments, not wearing the proper headgear can increase the risk of heat-related illnesses, like heat stroke