

# Hard Hat and Fall Protection

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Do you think that the use of personal protective equipment is over-rated? Here are two actual stories.

Large, heavy plates of steel were being welded to form a section of deck in a shipyard. As can be expected, some warpage occurred which required correction. Hydraulic jacks accomplished this through the application of pressure. Off to one side an individual was sighting down the plates to judge the corrections. Suddenly a temporary weld broke causing the plates to jump apart. One of these struck the man on the side of his hard hat with enough force to puncture the shell. In case you do not know, this is not easy to do and attests to the force of the blow. This person did suffer injury. However, so far, he has been able to continue working. Imagine what would have happened if he had not been wearing the hard hat. There is a good possibility he would have suffered a very serious and permanent head injury. In other words, his life, and that of his family, could have taken a tragic turn for the worse.

You may not know that hard hats are not designed to provide the maximum level of protection from blows to the side. Was this an isolated episode? I do not think so. There are plenty of people around who have fallen, and struck their head on something as they have gone down. But they were wearing a hard hat and are still functioning today because of the protection it provided.

Need another story to believe that personal protective equipment works? This incident occurred inside a 60-foot deep tank at a wastewater treatment plant. After some scaffold planking slipped, a worker fell only 6 to 8 feet before being stopped by his safety harness. This harness prevented him from plunging an additional 40 to the bottom of the tank. He was rescued by firefighters and lifeguards, examined at a hospital, and released. Do you think he would have walked away if he had not been wearing the harness?

Personal protective equipment works, but only if you wear it.

## GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

## **ENDING THE MEETING**

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

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Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

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### **Comments:**

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