

Hard Hats

Federal law governing whether golf course maintenance staff must wear hard hats is found in 29 CFR 1910. The regulation says employees shall wear protective helmets when working in areas where there is a potential for injury to the head from falling objects.

The regulation does not specifically address whether hard hats should be worn by golf course maintenance staff on the golf course. However, a 1995 sampling of experts in regional OSHA offices revealed they did not believe hard hats would need to be worn on the golf course. It was even suggested that wearing hard hats might cause golfers to carelessly hit balls towards staff, or even tempt golfers to try to hit staff. We are not aware of any situation where this interpretation has been challenged.

Even though hard hats are probably not necessary, the law requires employers to assess the workplace [PDF] to determine if hazards are present which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as hard hats. Employers need to write and keep in their files a dated "certification of hazard assessment" which is a memo or note saying that the assessment has been performed and that the equipment provided is adequate.

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TITLE 29--LABOR
CHAPTER XVII -- OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY
AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION,
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

PART 1910
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH STANDARDS
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Subpart I--Personal Protective Equipment
Sec. 1910.132 General requirements.

Authority: Sections 4, 6, and 8, Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 653, 655, 657); Secretary of Labor's Order No. 12-71 (36 FR 8754), 8-76 (41 FR 25059), 9-83 (48 FR 35736), 1-90 (55 FR 9033), or 6-96 (62 FR 111), as applicable.

Sections 1910.132, 1910.134, and 1910.138 also issued under 29 CFR part 1911.

Sections 1910.133, 1910.135, and 1910.136 also issued under 29 CFR part 1911 and 5 U.S.C. 553.

(a) Application. Protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields and barriers, shall be provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition wherever it is necessary by reason of hazards of processes or environment, chemical hazards, radiological hazards, or mechanical irritants encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or impairment in the function of any part of the body through absorption, inhalation or

physical contact.

(b) Employee-owned equipment. Where employees provide their own protective equipment, the employer shall be responsible to assure its adequacy, including proper maintenance, and sanitation of such equipment.

(c) Design. All personal protective equipment shall be of safe design and construction for the work to be performed.

(d) Hazard assessment and equipment selection. (1) The employer shall assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). If such hazards are present, or likely to be present, the employer shall:

(i) Select, and have each affected employee use, the types of PPE that will protect the affected employee from the hazards identified in the hazard assessment;

(ii) Communicate selection decisions to each affected employee; and,

(iii) Select PPE that properly fits each affected employee.

Note: Non-mandatory Appendix B contains an example of procedures that would comply with the requirement for a hazard assessment.

(2) The employer shall verify that the required workplace hazard assessment has been performed through a written certification that identifies the workplace evaluated; the person certifying that the evaluation has been performed; the date(s) of the hazard assessment; and, which identifies the document as a certification of hazard assessment.

(e) Defective and damaged equipment. Defective or damaged personal protective equipment shall not be used.

(f) Training. (1) The employer shall provide training to each employee who is required by this section to use PPE. Each such employee shall be trained to know at least the following:

(i) When PPE is necessary;

(ii) What PPE is necessary;

(iii) How to properly don, doff, adjust, and wear PPE;

(iv) The limitations of the PPE; and,

(v) The proper care, maintenance, useful life and disposal of the PPE.

(2) Each affected employee shall demonstrate an understanding of the training specified in paragraph (f)(1) of this section, and the ability to use PPE properly, before being allowed to perform work requiring the use of PPE.

(3) When the employer has reason to believe that any affected employee who has already been trained does not have the understanding and skill required by paragraph (f)(2) of this section, the employer shall retrain each such employee. Circumstances where retraining is required include, but are not limited to, situations where:

(i) Changes in the workplace render previous training obsolete; or

(ii) Changes in the types of PPE to be used render previous training obsolete; or

(iii) Inadequacies in an affected employee's knowledge or use of assigned PPE indicate that the employee has not retained the requisite understanding or skill.

(4) The employer shall verify that each affected employee has received and understood the required training through a written certification that contains the name of each employee trained, the date(s) of training, and that identifies the subject of the certification.

(g) Paragraphs (d) and (f) of this section apply only to

Secs. 1910.133, 1910.135, 1919.136, and 1910.138. Paragraphs (d) and (f) of this section do not apply to Secs. 1910.134 and 1910.137.