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PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT SAVES LIVES

Hard Hats and Fall Protection

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 waste water 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.

Safety Recommendations: _____

Job Specific Topics: _____

M.S.D.S Reviewed: _____

Attended By:

