

SAFETY SHOOTER

Hard Hats and Beer Cans...Now and Then

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Why do we wear hard hats? Is it because the sky is falling? Let's say you are pouring a 10,000 ft² (930 m²) slab-on-ground with no concrete boom and nothing overhead. Why the need to wear a hard hat? How about a backyard residential swimming pool 8 ft (2.4 m) deep with nothing overhead? Is a hard hat really needed? Or what about the engineer who comes by the job with the architect? Do they really need hard hats? Why do job sites post "HARD HATS REQUIRED" signs?

It's called job-site awareness and everyone must wear a proper hard hat. I realized this when one of my employees showed up with one of those cowboy hard hats and the owner of the project asked me if we were at a rodeo or at his job site building his structure. Needless to say, cowboy hard hats are no longer permitted.



Canal lining project in southern California using dry-mix shotcrete, 1954



Double chamber dry-process shotcrete machine used on seismic retrofit project, 1954



Structural retaining wall project using dry-mix shotcrete, 1955

This concept of job-site awareness extends to all personal protective equipment (PPE). It seems to bother many employees that companies require items such as safety goggles, steel-toed boots, long pants (no shorts), and gloves. Being properly equipped needs to become a habit. That means PPE is used all the time. Vince Lombardi, legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, said, "Winning is not a "sometimes" thing. It is an 'all-the-time' thing." The same goes for safety.

Years ago things were quite different on job sites. I hope you enjoy the old-time pictures from my father's jobs. See if you can find anyone with a hard hat. The last picture is from one of our current jobs. Notice the contrast with the old days—now there are hard hats, safety vests, certified scaffolding radios for pump operations, and so on. And if you found a beer can at this job site, it would cost over \$500,000 in lost billings and attorney fees. Be safe.



Gunitite shoring and basement wall project using dry-mix shotcrete, 1955



Gunitite shoring and basement wall project using wet-mix shotcrete, 2005


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