



KENTUCKY AGC Self Insurers' Fund

Hard Hats to Helmets (H2H)

Hard Hats to Helmets (H2H) is an industry-driven **information and advocacy initiative** aimed at advancing the adoption of **modern safety helmets** over traditional construction hard hats to **better protect workers from head injuries** on job sites. The website (hardhatstohelmets.org) serves as a centralized resource for education, technical content, and implementation guidance.

Background & Industry Context

- Traditional hard hats have remained largely unchanged for decades and were designed primarily to protect from falling objects with limited protection elsewhere.
- Growing research and industry experience show that **traumatic brain injuries (TBIs)** are a significant contributor to construction fatalities and serious injuries, accounting for a large share of worker deaths and life-altering incidents.

Why Helmets Matter

H2H emphasizes that helmets provide **superior protection** compared to hard hats by combining:

1. **Energy-absorbing liners** for impact and penetration resistance around the head, not just at the top.
2. **Chin straps** to ensure the helmet stays on during slips, trips, and falls — a common cause of head injury.

Key Benefits Highlighted

- **Improved Safety Performance:** Helmets reduce the risk of serious head injuries and fatalities more effectively than traditional hard hats.
- **Industry Adoption:** The site showcases case stories and contractors already integrating modern helmets into their safety programs, signaling a shift in workforce protection expectations.
- **Technical & Regulatory Support:** Although traditional hard hats continue to meet OSHA and ANSI Type I requirements, helmets built to current standards and enhanced impact criteria offer performance benefits that many safety professionals find compelling.

Resources & Tools Available

The H2H website provides practical materials to support decision-making and transition planning, including:

- Regulatory requirements and technical specifications (standards and performance criteria)
- Research and development insights on head protection technologies
- Helmet vendor information to assist procurement decisions
- Construction industry adoption examples and success stories
- Helmet use cases and testimonials from contractors and safety leaders alike (hardhatstohelmets.org)

Helmet Stories & Testimonials

Several real-world narratives from contractors and trades professionals illustrate how helmets have made a tangible difference in protecting workers—often after incidents where traditional hard hats failed or were displaced. These stories help safety managers articulate the human and financial value of upgrading head protection equipment.

Actionable Takeaways for Safety Programs

- **Assess Current PPE** policies and consider integrating safety helmets where higher levels of protection are needed.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** Use research and industry adoption examples to communicate with owners, general contractors, and subcontractors about benefits and compliance considerations.
- **Procurement Planning:** Evaluate helmet designs, standards compliance, fit-testing, and accessory compatibility to ensure worker comfort and acceptance.
- **Training & Communication:** Ensure workers understand the performance advantages and proper use (including chin strap engagement) to maximize protective benefits.

Conclusion

Hard Hats to Helmets offers a compelling case for evolving head protection in construction. By providing up-to-date technical information, regulatory context, success stories, and resources, it supports safety managers in evaluating and, where appropriate, driving the transition from legacy hard hats to more protective safety helmets with the clear goal of reducing TBIs and saving lives on job sites.