Using & Maintaining Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
Bump Caps, Hard Hats & Ear Protection

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a supplementary form of protection against hazards that are not controlled through engineering or administrative means. PPE is designed to protect employees from serious injury or illness resulting from contact with chemical, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. PPE includes a variety of equipment and garments such as safety eyewear, coveralls, gloves, vests, earplugs, and respirators. PPE, when used properly, protects against hazards but does not eliminate them.

Employees are required to use and maintain PPE in a sanitary and reliable condition. Here’s what to do…

**Headwear: (Bump Caps & Hard Hats)**

**Inspect, Maintain, Replace:** Inspect your headwear shell & suspension routinely for dents, cracks, nicks, gouges and any damage from impact, penetration, abrasion, rough treatment or wear that may reduce protection. If your headwear shows signs of worn or damaged parts, remove it from service and replace it immediately. If a forcible blow strikes your headwear, replace it immediately… even if there is no visible damage. Clean your headwear with mild soap and lukewarm water. Don’t use solvents, chemicals, adhesives, gasoline or similar substances. Substances like these may adversely affect headwear material.

**Test - Here’s a simple test to determine if headwear strength is degraded:** Compress the shell inward from the sides about 1” with both hands and then release the pressure without dropping the shell. The shell should quickly return to its original shape, exhibiting elasticity. Compare the elasticity of the sample with that of a new shell. If the sample does not exhibit elasticity similar to that of a new shell, or if it cracks due to brittleness, replace immediately.

**Modification:** Headwear may not be modified in any way. Don’t remove the suspension harness, drill holes, inscribe or paint it. An added hole, no matter how small, will adversely affect headwear’s ability to protect you. If you drilled or punched holes in your headwear, replace it immediately with a new cap. Other than writing the name of the person who wears the headwear, don’t write or draw on, place personal stickers or labels on it. Only your name label and OFD snowflake may be applied to headwear. Safety committee representatives also wear a round green safety committee sticker on the back of their headwear so new employees can easily identify them. OFD employees may contact Gina Krause at MO1, your shift coordinator or supervisor for a new name label or OFD snowflake.

**Note:** A bump cap doesn’t offer the same level of protection as a hard hat. A bump cap only guards against minor bumps, abrasions and scrapes. A hard hat also guards against impact forces from falling objects, electrical shock and burn. **Both types of headwear must be worn with the bill face forward to protect the nose, eyes and face.**

**Earplugs:**

**Donning:**

- Make sure your hands are clean before fitting earplugs.
- Reach around your head then pull up and back on your outer ear. This straightens out the ear canal, making way for a snug fit.
- Hold the stem end of the earplug and insert it well inside your ear canal until you feel it sealing and the fit is comfortable.

- Test the fit. In a noisy environment, and with earplugs inserted, cup both hands over your ears and release. You should not notice a significant difference in the noise level. If the noise seems to lessen when your hands are cupped over your ears, your earplugs are probably not fitted properly. Remove and refit following instructions.

- Always remove earplugs slowly, twisting them to break the seal. If you remove them too quickly, you could damage your eardrum.

**Inspect, Maintain, Replace:**

- **Inspect reusable earplugs frequently and clean often in soapy water.**
- **Replace earplugs when they become hard, torn or deformed.**
- **Do not** remove the cord that ties earplugs together as one piece.