

OSHA's Shift From Hard Hats to Safety Helmets Should Raise Concern for Employers

Labor & Employment Law Update

Matthew Horn on December 27, 2023

OSHA recently announced a significant change in its head protection policy, and is transitioning from traditional hard hats to safety helmets for its employees. This move is more than just an internal policy shift, and signals a broader push that will soon affect all employers whose employees are required to wear head protection, likely leading to citations when employees wear traditional hard hats in lieu of the helmets—which OSHA specifically notes can fall off, do not protect the side of the head, and keep heat trapped inside.

While the announcement, on its face, focuses on OSHA employees, it is a clear indication of how OSHA will regulate head protection going forward. Employers should anticipate that this internal change at OSHA will soon morph into an expectation for all employers. OSHA will likely start enforcing this new expectation in 2024, citing employers who have not switched to the strap-on helmets. Employers should start preparing for this change and its implications now.