

## Are Hard Hat Stickers/Labels OSHA Compliant Message?

This brings up an important question: does OSHA allow hard hat stickers and labels? The answer isn't a simple "yes" or "no". According to OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.132(a), PPE must be "...maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition. The specific requirements for head protection (protective helmets) are outlined in 29 CFR 1910.135, which incorporates by reference American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z89.1-1986, Z89.1-1997, and Z89.1-2003.

## Hard Hat Inspections

To ensure hard hats maintain said "reliable" conditions, always inspect them for signs of dents, cracks, and penetration. Note any damage due to impact, rough treatment, or wear that will reduce the original degree of protection as well.

Labels may interfere with electrical resistance and potentially conceal damage that would be otherwise easily identifiable during the employee's inspection. Always apply labels according to the manufacturer's instructions. The only exception to this rule is if the employer demonstrates that the altered protective helmets are as effective as those meeting the requirements of Z89.1.

OSHA will allow the placement of stickers on hard hats when the manufacturer authorizes the alteration. The employer will also need to prove that the PPE cannot be affected by the adhesive on the stickers.

