

STORING DIRTY GLOVES IN YOUR HARD HAT?



HARD-HAT INFECTION?

The use of hard hats has undoubtedly saved many lives. However, it was recently reported that a worker developed a severe skin infection on his head, called cellulitis. A possible cause was storing dirty/soiled gloves within the individual's hard hat.

POTENTIAL CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS OF CELLULITIS

Our skin normally has many active bacteria living on it. Healthy skin is an effective barrier, which stops skin bacteria from entering and growing inside the body. However, when there is a break in the skin, bacteria can easily enter the body and grow

there, causing a bacterial skin infection and skin inflammation.

Work gloves are designed to protect the hands from injury and contamination, by preventing entrance to the body through the skin surface. If placed in a hard hat, the exterior of the dirty gloves can have direct contact with the skin, which can cause infection, especially if there is a cut or abrasion in the skin.

In the reported case, the hard hat's forehead 'sweat' band was also very dirty, from the gloves and general sweat. This would increase the risk of infection in any hard hat. Although it makes a 'convenient' storage area, your hard hat is not designed for this and should not be used to store dirty gloves.

TIPS

- Do not store dirty or soiled gloves inside your hard hat
- Check your PPE regularly! Look at the condition of your hard hat. Get a new one if necessary – especially the head-band insert
- Regularly check your skin for cuts and abrasions
- Look at the condition of your gloves. If they are heavily soiled or contaminated, get them replaced.
- Cover any cuts or abrasions with a suitable dressing

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Authorised by John Setka, Secretary, Elias Spornovasilis and Shaun Reardon, Assistant Secretaries of the CFMEU Construction and General Division

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