

# Care and Use of MSA Helmets: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers



**It is important that you read and carefully follow all of the instructions and warnings accompanying your helmet. Failure to follow the instructions listed on the bag provided with your helmet may result in serious injury or death.**

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QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>What electrical class does my MSA industrial helmet meet?</b>	<p>Three classes indicate a helmet's electrical insulation rating relative to ANSI/ISEA Z89.1-2014 and CSA Z94.1-2015 standards: Class E (electrical) tested to 20,000 volts, Class G (general) tested to 2,200 volts, and Class C (conductive) that provides no electrical protection. However, these voltage ratings are not intended as an indication of the voltage at which the helmet protects the wearer.</p> <p><b><i>The following MSA Class E* helmets (electrical) are intended to reduce the danger of exposure to high voltage conductors:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• V-Gard® Cap and Hat</li><li>• V-Gard 500 Non-Vented Cap</li><li>• SmoothDome® Cap</li><li>• Topgard® Cap and Hat</li><li>• V-Gard GREEN Cap</li><li>• Super-V® Cap</li><li>• Vanguard™ Cap</li></ul> <p><small>*Class E ratings inherently include Class G ratings, as testing includes the lower voltage levels represented in the Class G testing procedure.</small></p> <p><b><i>The following MSA Class G (general) helmets are intended to reduce the danger of contact exposure to low voltage conductors:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thermalgard® Cap</li><li>• Skullgard® Cap and Hat</li><li>• Comfo® Cap</li></ul> <p><b><i>The following MSA Class C (conductive) helmet is not intended to provide protection against contact with electrical conductors:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• V-Gard 500 Vented Cap</li></ul>
<b>To what degree are MSA's industrial elevated temperature helmets rated?</b>	<p>Helmets marked with the HT designation have been certified to the optional Higher Temperature test of ANSI/ISEA Z89.1. In this test, helmets are pre-conditioned in an oven at 60°C ± 2°C (140°F ± 3.6°F) and then tested per the ANSI/ISEA Z89.1 Industrial Head Protection Standard for top force transmission.</p> <p>In addition, the following helmets were exposed to a radiant heat load until the surface temperature on the top of the helmet reaches the temperature shown below and then tested per the ANSI/ISEA Z89.1 Industrial Head Protection Standard for top force transmission. The source of the radiant heat load was located above the top of the helmet. This testing is performed by MSA and is not part of the helmet certification process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topgard Cap/Hat ..... 275° F Radiant Heat Load</li><li>• Thermalgard Cap ..... 350° F Radiant Heat Load</li><li>• Skullgard Cap/Hat ..... 350° F Radiant Heat Load</li></ul>

**WE KNOW WHAT'S AT STAKE.**



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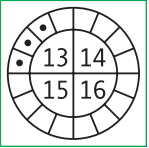

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<b>Which MSA industrial helmets offer protection from arc flashes?</b>	There is no arc flash test or standard for industrial head protection products. According to NFPA 70E-2012, a worker is required to wear a helmet rated as Class E in accordance with ANSI/ISEA Z89.1-2014 or CSA Z94.1-2015. When used in conjunction with any MSA visor and frame, all Class E MSA hard hats will perform as well as the visor, or protect the wearer to the same calorie-rating level as the visor.
<b>What are the differences between traditional V-Gard helmets and the V-Gard GREEN helmets?</b>	The V-Gard GREEN Helmet is similar to a traditional V-Gard helmet in that it is made of high-density polyethylene (HDPE). However, unlike traditional hard hats in which the HDPE is sourced from non-renewable sources, V-Gard GREEN Helmet shell material is sourced entirely from green HDPE, which is made of ethylene produced from sugarcane-based ethanol.
<b>Do V-Gard GREEN helmets meet the same Standards performance criteria as the traditional V-Gard?</b>	Yes. The V-Gard GREEN Helmet and the traditional V-Gard Helmet offer the same trusted look and quality customers have come to expect from MSA. V-Gard and V-Gard GREEN helmets are third-party SEI certified as Type I, Class E under ANSI/ISEA Z89.1-2014 and CSA Z94.1-2015.
<b>What is the service life of an MSA industrial helmet?</b>	<p>MSA helmets are designed with high-quality, wear-resistant materials but do not last forever. The helmet's protective properties will degrade by exposure to many common work environments, such as extreme temperatures, chemical exposure, sunlight, and normal daily wear. MSA recommends the following replacement schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Suspension</b> (replace every 12 months)</li> <li>• <b>Helmet</b> (replace every 5 years)</li> </ul> <p>To ensure that a helmet shell or suspension has not reached the end of its service life, MSA recommends the following procedure before and after each use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visually inspect the shell for breakage, cracks, crazing, discoloration, chalky appearance, or any other unusual condition. Also, inspect the shell for brittleness by flexing the brim (do not compress the shell sides). These conditions can indicate a loss of impact, penetration, and/or electrical resistance and the helmet must be replaced immediately.</li> <li>• The suspension should be checked for loss of flexibility. Check for cracks, breaks, frayed straps, or damaged stitching. If any of these conditions exist, the suspension must be replaced immediately.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: These are <b>recommended</b> useful service life guidelines. Wear or damage noticed during a regular inspection may determine that an earlier replacement of the entire helmet is necessary. ALWAYS replace the helmet after it has withstood impact or penetration. The life of a Skullgard Helmet tends to exceed our suggested service life due to the increased rigidity of the helmet's materials and areas of use. However, as with other personal protective equipment, a Skullgard Helmet's life should ultimately be determined by routine daily inspection before and after use.</p>
<b>Why don't MSA industrial helmets have an Ultraviolet (UV) indicator?</b>	While there may be benefits to a UV indicator, we feel that this only tells part of the story. Other factors, such as the appearance of cracks or crazing, frayed suspension straps, or other anomalies dictate that—regardless of a UV indicator—users should perform daily inspections before and after each use. Keep in mind, too, that all MSA helmets have UV inhibitor molded into the material as it's being manufactured to decelerate degradation caused by UV radiation.



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<b>What does the date code on an MSA industrial helmet represent?</b>	<p>The date code indicates when the shell was molded. Date codes are molded into the underside of the shell's brim with the year and month in which that specific shell was molded. This date does not indicate a helmet's service life; the service life begins when it is placed into service (see "What is the service life of an MSA industrial helmet?" above).</p> <p><b>The following date code refers to these MSA Protective Caps/Hats:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• V-Gard Cap and Hat</li> <li>• V-Gard 500 Vented and Non-Vented Cap</li> <li>• V-Gard GREEN Cap</li> <li>• SmoothDome Cap</li> </ul> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topgard Cap and Hat</li> <li>• Super-V Cap</li> <li>• Vanguard Cap</li> <li>• Comfo Cap</li> </ul> </div> </div> <p>The large number inside the circle indicates the year. The arrow inside the circle points to the outer ring of numbers that represents the month. Therefore, this specific example reads July (7th month) of 2012 (12 in center).</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>MSA Skullgard Cap and Hat</b></p>  <p>Four years are noted in the center, and each year is surrounded by four medallions. As each quarter of each year passes, the medallions are "dotted." This process is continuous and read in a clockwise direction. Therefore, this specific example reads 3rd quarter (July-September) of 2013.</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>MSA Bump Cap</b></p>  <p>Two rings are noted around the center circle: (A) the outer ring indicates the year, and (B) the inner ring indicates the month. The smaller arrow between both rings points to the year (A), and the arrow inside the center circle points to the month (B). Therefore, this specific example reads March (3rd month) of 2013 (13 on outer ring).</p> </div> </div>
<b>Can a bandana, hood, or skullcap be worn under an MSA industrial helmet?</b>	<p>A bandana, hood, or skullcap should not affect an MSA helmet's impact properties as long as it is worn smoothly on top of the head. Caution should be taken to avoid bunching up of material, which can cause pressure points and affect the helmet's ability to protect as designed. A ratchet suspension and/or chinstrap should be used to help ensure the best possible fit.</p>
<b>Can a baseball cap be worn under an MSA industrial helmet?</b>	<p>MSA does not recommend placing a baseball cap between the head and the suspension; baseball caps may interfere with the helmet suspension's capability to work properly during impact.</p>
<b>Can anything be placed in the space between an MSA industrial helmet's shell and its suspension?</b>	<p>Items such as gloves, cigarettes, and earplugs should never be stored between the suspension and the shell, as this space is needed in the event of an impact to ensure the energy from that impact is absorbed by the shell and suspension. Any object in this space can transmit significant forces to the head and neck that could result in serious injury or death.</p>
<b>Can an MSA industrial helmet be painted?</b>	<p>MSA recommends that paint never be used on any helmet except for Thermalgard Caps and Skullgard Caps/Hats. Paint may attack and damage shells of other MSA industrial helmets, thereby reducing the degree of protection originally provided. Due to the inert properties of these three shells—Thermalgard and Skullgard Helmets, MSA is able to paint these shells with paints that have been qualified for such purposes.</p>



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<b>What effect if any does a logo have on an MSA industrial helmet?</b>	The ink used by MSA for helmet imprinting does not affect a shell's integrity. Once the ink is cured—approximately 24 to 48 hours after being placed onto a helmet—the ink will not flake off of the hard hat, as it then becomes part of the shell material.
<b>Do any MSA industrial helmets and/or their suspensions contain latex?</b>	MSA industrial helmets as assemblies include the helmet shell and suspension. Shells are made from one of the following materials, depending upon helmet model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polyethylene</li> <li>• Phenolic</li> <li>• Nylon</li> <li>• Fiberglass</li> <li>• Polycarbonate</li> </ul> All of our industrial helmet suspensions are manufactured with molded plastics and nylon webbing. Neither the suspensions nor shells contain latex.
<b>Can permanent markers be used on MSA industrial helmets?</b>	MSA helmets should not be altered or modified in any way. However, it is permissible to use alcohol-based permanent markers as those markers do not contain metal pigments which may affect helmet dielectric properties. Markers, including metallic, containing butanol, diacetone alcohol, or propanol are safe for use. According to MSA's testing, the chemicals in these markers should not have any effect upon our helmets as these are relatively fast-drying inks. However, because it is impossible for us to test all permanent markers, caution should still be taken when making use of such materials. Also be sure that the ink is not covering any damage on the helmet (i.e. cracking).
<b>Can non-metallic stickers or tape be used on MSA industrial helmets?</b>	An MSA helmet should not be altered or modified in any way. However, it is permissible to use pressure-sensitive, non-metallic stickers or tape with self-adhesive backing as long as they are placed no closer than ½" from the helmet's edge. According to MSA test results, pressure sensitive, non-metallic stickers or tape placed in such locations will not affect the burn-through (i.e. dielectric classification) of an MSA helmet's structure.

Note: This Bulletin contains only a general description of the products shown. While product uses and performance capabilities are generally described, the products shall not, under any circumstances, be used by untrained or unqualified individuals. The products shall not be used until the product instructions/user manual, which contains detailed information concerning the proper use and care of the products, including any warnings or cautions, have been thoroughly read and understood. Specifications are subject to change without prior notice. MSA is a registered trademark of MSA Technology, LLC in the US, Europe, and other Countries. For all other trademarks visit <https://us.msasafety.com/Trademarks>.

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