

**WORKSAFE SERVICES DIVISION  
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY  
LEGISLATIVE INTERPRETATIONS**



|                |   |                                    |
|----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Topic</b>   | Protective headwear – Wearing backwards | Issued by: V.P., WorkSafe Services |
| <b>Statute</b> | <i>Regulation 91-191</i>                | Date Issued: December 5, 2002      |
| <b>Section</b> | 40                                      | Date Revised:                      |

**40(1)** On a project site, an employee shall use Class E, Type 1 headwear that conforms to ANSI standard ANSI Z89.1-1997, "American National Standard for Industrial Head Protection" or a standard offering equivalent or better protection.

**40(2)** At a place of employment, other than a project site, where an employee is exposed to a hazard that may injure the employee's head, the employee shall use protective equipment that is appropriate to the hazard and that conforms to ANSI standard ANSI Z89.1-1997, "American National Standard for Industrial Head Protection" or a standard offering equivalent or better protection.

**Question**

Is there a requirement to wear the headwear with the peak forward?

**Response**

In the province of New Brunswick we cite ANSI Z89.1-1997 or equivalent, therefore the use of protective headwear in NB workplaces must meet both the standard and the manufacturer's requirements.

Z89.1-1997 contains the following definitions:

**Brim** - an integral part of a helmet shell extending outward around the circumference of the lower shell.

**Cap** - a helmet without a full brim, which may include a peak.

**Harness** - the complete assembly used to maintain a helmet in correct wearing position in the wearer's head.

**Hat** - a helmet with a full brim.

**Peak** - a part of the shell extending forward over the wearer's forehead.

The standard's design, performance or testing requirements do not vary between caps or hats. In other words, as far as ANSI's concerned, certified hats and caps both provide equal impact and penetration protection. In fact, throughout the document there is no mention of testing the peak or requiring the peak to be pointed forward during testing. The impact and penetrations test required for the front, rear and sides of the test samples are identical.

Furthermore, *Appendix A - Recommendations, Cautions, Use and Care* does not recommend the peak be worn forward nor does it oppose the peak being worn backwards.

Lastly, there are ANSI certified protective headwear that are marketed as rearward peak protective headwear. The technical director of one such manufacturer confirmed that they have simply installed the harness backwards.

If the harness is oriented in the proper direction and the manufacturer does not disallow re-installing the harness in the orientation so that the peak is towards the back of the head, than it is acceptable to wear the headwear with the peak backward. However, workplaces may impose requirements above and beyond the requirements of 91-191. As an employer, if you feel the peak adds protection, you may require your employees to wear their protective headwear with the peaks forward.