



September 25, 2009

Hard Hat Inspection Reminder

MSA has received reports concerning the development of a single crack across the top of V-Gard® Protective Helmets manufactured in the U.S. Related to these reports, a wide range of misinformation concerning MSA V-Gard Helmets has been circulated via the Internet. Examples include false statements that MSA has issued a recall of V-Gard Helmets, or that all V-Gard Helmets manufactured in March of 2008 are to be removed from service. These statements are **not** true.

Our investigation into these reports is summarized below:

- 1) The incidence of V-Gard hard hats exhibiting this cracking is limited to blue and red helmets manufactured in the U.S. and are estimated to represent less than one one-hundredth of a percent of our U.S. V-Gard helmet production over the past five years.
- 2) The cause of these cases has been traced to a variation of copper pigment content, which is a component in blue and red colorants, and minor process variations. In mid-2008, MSA changed to a different colorant and improved the process variation. **MSA has not received a single report of any cracked helmets – of any color - since these improvements were put into place.**
- 3) Our testing indicates that a cap exhibiting this type of crack continues to meet the ANSI Z89.1-2003 and CSA Z94.1-2005 impact and penetration test requirements. **However, a crack of this type would prevent the cap from passing the electrical resistance test.**

Inspection Reminder

This situation concerning MSA V-Gard Protective Helmets serves as a good reminder to the industry about the importance of routine daily inspection of all safety equipment, including hard hats.

MSA instructions require all of our hard hats to be inspected before and after each use. While proper inspection would prevent the use of a cracked hard hat, V-Gard hard hats that do not exhibit a crack and also meet all other inspection requirements are suitable for use and should remain in service.

Helmet Replacement

MSA will replace – free of charge – any U.S. made V-Gard hard hat exhibiting a crack of this kind that was manufactured between September of 2004 and September 2009. This 5-year timeframe aligns with MSA's maximum recommended useful life of the hard hat shell. The label on the inside the hard hat indicates where it was manufactured. Any helmet in question must be returned to MSA within 45 days of notification to MSA. If

helmets are not returned to MSA within this timeframe, customers may be charged for the full replacement cost.

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Contacting MSA

In order to expedite the replacement of V-Gard hard hats that exhibit any type of cracking condition, please contact the appropriate MSA location. In the U.S. and Canada, customers should contact the MSA Product Concern Hotline at 1-866-672-6977.

Outside of the U.S and Canada, please contact your local MSA Affiliate or MSA Representative. A listing of MSA global contact information can be found our Website, www.MSAnet.com.

As the industry's leading provider of protective hard hats, MSA stands behind its V-Gard products. We thank you for your trust in MSA and our V-Gard line. Your loyalty has helped position the V-Gard brand as the leading and most recognized industrial hard hat and as an icon in the industry.

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