**PRESS RELEASE**

Keep your head when selecting the correct protective equipment

***(Date), 2013:*** *Although safety helmets and hardhats are often wrongly regarded as being basic and unsophisticated pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE), MSA Africa warns that it is important to bear in mind that they protect the most important part of the body, and careful consideration should therefore be taken during the selection process.*

MSA is a global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of sophisticated products that protect people's health and safety, and MSA Africa HEFHC senior product manager **Loren Pearson** stresses the importance of making the correct choice in what could ultimately be a life-and-death decision when selecting head protection equipment.

With almost 100 years of safety equipment manufacturing experience, Pearson points out that MSA is able to offer some practical advice to ensure the most effective head protection. She notes that there are six criteria that determine the choice of a certain hardhat, and all of these have to be taken into account to ensure that the best possible product is selected for a specific application. They are: performance, durability, comfort, extra features, style and price.

**Performance**

This should never be compromised as the consequences are severe. Ensure that you select a certified product that has been tested to minimum safety specifications such as SANS 1397:2003, EN 397:2000 and have approvals from recognised bodies such as the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR). A high quality, strong and durable product made by a reputable safety equipment manufacturer will ensure good protection with minimal replacements.

The MSA range of V-Gard® caps and hats and V-Gard® 500 vented caps are DMR-approved and exceed SANS 1397:2003 and EN 397:2000 specifications. The V-Gard shell is made from 100 percent virgin HDPE, while the V-Gard® 500 and 520 range are manufactured from high quality ABS. The MSA HeatGard cap is made from special heat tolerant material that makes it suitable for high heat applications such as furnaces.

**Comfort**

Uncomfortable hardhats are often not worn and, without proper fit, do not offer adequate head protection. The MSA V-Gard® caps and hats offer a choice of two four-point suspensions - either the economy Snugfit or the premium FasTrac (ratchet-type). The V-Gard® 520 linesman cap, V-Gard® 500 vented cap and HeatGard cap all come fitted with a four-point FasTrac premium liner.

All caps and hats in the V-Gard® range feature a patented Glaregard surface underbrim to reduce reflective glare. What's more, they also have a slot above the ear for compatibility with hearing protection and face protection products also offered by MSA.

**Extra features**

It is important from the outset to determine whether options such as a chinstrap, reflective tape (for visibility) and face, hearing or neck protection is required, and how these will impact on the safety and fit of the hardhat. Only use accessories that have been developed to be used with a particular brand hardhat. MSA's entire hardhat range easily accommodates accessories such as mining lamps. The V-Gard® range of caps and hats feature 440 VAC dielectric approval for use in electrical environments. The V-Gard® 520 linesman cap, is specifically designed for high performance protection while working at heights and in confined spaces, features a cutaway peak for undisturbed upward vision and unrestricted movement, and comes standard with a 3point chinstrap.

**Style**

A good looking hardhat will in all likelihood have a better chance of being worn. MSA V-Gard® is available in a wide range of colours and in cap (peak) or hat (brim) styles. The V-Gard 500 vented cap is available in six colours, although the V-Gard 520 linesman cap is only available in white. Extra features such as MSA's Logo Express allows for customisation and branding.

**Price**

Hardhats are considered basic PPE despite the fact that they are required to protect the most important part of the body. Consider price carefully, as extra features and outstanding safety performance of approved products ultimately add to the final price.

Other factors that are worth consideration include;

- How often will the head protection equipment be worn?
- What is the working environment?
- Are different styles or colours needed to identify different workers onsite?
- What is the most appropriate shell material and shape?
- Should it be vented or non-vented?
- What type of suspension/liner - plastic or textile?
- Should it have ratchet or quick adjustment system?
- Are any extra features needed?
- Should it be customised with a logo or brand name?
- Should it accommodate accessories?

MSA offers the ideal solution to these criteria with stylish and patented V-Gard ® hardhats that provide high comfort and performance levels for protection against various hazards in industrial environments. The V-Gard® range has become a well recognised product worldwide and has a proven track record for saving people's lives, and is characterised and easily identified by the trademark 'V' on top. It has been adapted to the needs of different user profiles in order to offer the safest and most comfortable protection in the industry.

Due to the overwhelming international success of the MSA range of head protection systems, the company is proud to sponsor the MSA Golden Helmet Award - which acknowledges companies that believe in protecting their staff by selecting and purchasing high quality head protection products that have directly saved a worker's life.

To find out more about the comprehensive range of MSA head protection systems visit [www.MSAsafety.com](http://www.msanet.com)

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**There are numerous photographs specific to this press release. Please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the MSA Africa link.

**About MSA**MSA been the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality safety products since 1914. MSA products may be simple to use and maintain, but they’re also highly-sophisticated devices and protective gear - the result of countless R&D hours, relentless testing, and an unwavering commitment to quality that saves lives and protects thousands of men and women each and every day. Many of MSA's most popular products integrate multiple combinations of electronics, mechanical systems, and advanced materials to ensure that users around the world remain protected in even the most hazardous of situations. MSA's dedication to safety has been the key to its impressive year-over-year growth. In eight of the past ten years, MSA has achieved record growth numbers, with annual revenues of more than US$1 billion.

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