Best Practices: The Right Way to Conduct a Blast Helmet Field Test [Downloadable Template]

Abrasive blasting is a tough, gritty job. However, much of the testing, evaluation, and review of blast equipment is performed in a very controlled environment. Any long-time abrasive blaster will tell you that a blasting job site with real-life conditions is the ideal testing ground for new blasting equipment, particularly blasting helmets.

To conduct a thorough and realistic field evaluation test for an abrasive blasting helmet, use the following template and tips below.

Blast Helmet Field Test Tips and Best Practices

1. Conduct any field test with your actual blasters.
These are the people who will be using this equipment, and they understand best which features help them perform their job most easily and efficiently.

2. Bring a current helmet.
For any field test, compare the current blasting helmet against any other helmets you are evaluating.

3. Test at an actual job site under real blasting conditions.
Trying on a blasting helmet in a conference room, break room, or showroom does not adequately show how the helmet fits or feels under the heat, grit, and movement patterns of a blaster at work. Pay attention to conditions inside the helmet after using for a shift (like sweaty padding), and imagine that after one month or one year of use.

4. Document as you go.
Even though it's tempting, don't wait until you're back at the office to document the users' feedback of the test. Write down the testers' feedback at each step in the process. Use a separate form for each field tester.

Blast Helmet Field Test Form

Items Needed:

- Current blasting helmet
- Test helmet(s)
- Accessories and attachments for test helmet (cooling tube, breathing tube, cape, etc.)
- Active abrasive blasting job-site
- Experienced blaster(s)
- Printed copy of field test form(s)
- Pen or pencil

Step 1. The Hold Test

Hold the test helmet in one hand and current helmet in the other.

Do you feel a difference in the weight of the helmets? _____

Which helmet feels lighter? _____

➲ *Need to Know: Lighter weight helmets mean less neck strain at the end of a full shift.*

Step 2. The Balance Test

Attach the appropriate cooling device for the helmet(s) being tested. Then adjust any inserts or cheek pads to determine the appropriate fit.

➲ *Need to Know: Read "Bullard Adjustable and Removable Cheek Pads – How to customize and sanitize."*

Evaluate the stability of the helmet. How stable does the helmet feel on your head with each of the following movements?

Bending forward _____

Squatting down _____

Turning head to look over right/left shoulder _____

Step 3. The Fit & Function Test

Use the helmet while blasting an actual job. Check for the following aspects regarding fit and function.

How cool is the air inside the helmet? _____

How does the airflow compare to your current helmet? _____

Is anything impairing the flow of air to your head or face? _____

How well did the breathing tube and helmet move with you as you worked? _____

Step 4. The Wear & Tear Test

Getting peace of mind about the durability of a blasting helmet includes not only the design features, but also the support of the helmet manufacturer. To help understand the toughness and long-lasting qualities of the helmet, note the following:

Length of Manufacturer's Warranty _____

Items Covered under Warranty_____

What design features prevent wear and tear in vulnerable areas?

- ☐ Breathing tube connection
- ☐ Cape attachment area/latch guard
- ☐ Field replaceable parts
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Step 5. The Overall Feedback

How would you describe the overall comfort level of the helmet? _____

_____

_____

How would you rate the level of airflow during use?

_____

_____

_____

What do you like best about the test helmet?

_____

_____

To include the Bullard GenVX blasting helmet in your Field Test, click here. We'll set you up with a demo helmet and a technical expert to get you started.