

TOOLBOX TALK NO.24

Foot Protection



Foot protection means guarding your toes, ankles and feet from injury. Believe it or not, your feet have 26 bones for support and 38 joints for movement in each foot. Feet also have blood vessels, ligaments, muscles and nerves, which is why it hurts when you stub your toe or drop something on your foot. Your feet are a critical part of your body that you use every day and, in some cases, enable you to do your job effectively.

Protective footwear worn in the workplace is designed to protect the foot from physical hazards such as falling objects, stepping on sharp objects, heat and cold, wet and slippery surfaces, or exposure to corrosive chemicals.

There are two major categories of work-related foot injuries. The first category includes foot injuries from punctures, crushing, sprains, and lacerations. They account for 10 percent of all reported disabling injuries. The second group of injuries includes those resulting from slips, trips, and falls. They account for 15 percent of all reported disabling injuries. Slips and falls do not always result in a foot injury but lack of attention to foot safety plays an important role in their occurrence.

Safety boots, commonly worn by construction workers, provide the required level of protection with steel toecaps and a steel plate moulded into the mid sole, protecting the wearer against dropped objects and penetration through the sole by sharp objects.

Footwear can have a variety of sole patterns and materials to help prevent slips in different conditions, including oil- or chemical-resistant soles. It can also be anti-static, electrically conductive or thermally insulating. Appropriate footwear should be selected for the risks identified

What should workers know when buying footwear for work? Good footwear should have the following qualities:

- ✓ The inner side of the shoe must be straight from the heel to the end of the big toe.
- ✓ The shoe must grip the heel firmly.
- ✓ The forepart must allow freedom of movement for the toes.

People buying footwear for work should take the following advice:

- ✓ Do not expect that footwear that is too tight will stretch with wear.
- ✓ Have both feet measured when buying shoes. Feet normally differ in size.
- ✓ Buy shoes to fit the bigger foot.
- ✓ Buy shoes late in the afternoon when feet are likely to be swollen to their maximum size.

It is essential that protective footwear is worn when people are on site, both from an employer's point of view, in being able to provide a safe place and a safe method of working and from an employee's position where safety footwear has a benefit in preventing injuries.



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The minimum acceptable standard we accept are boots that meet grade BS EN 20345; 2011 S1 P minimum, this provides full ankle support. Boots are to be laced fully up when worn. Safety shoes/trainers are not acceptable.