



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Safety Tips: Feet Protection



Protect your feet. You need them to get around! As all authorities convey to employees, including our Armed forces personnel, "Protect Your Feet."

PURPOSES OF PROTECTIVE FOOTWEAR IN WORK ENVIRONMENTS-

Hazards include:

- Objects dropping on them
- Stepping on sharp objects
- Temperature Extremes (hot or cold)
- Exposure to harmful substances
- Slips and falls
- Electric current

All of us should be constantly aware of any potential hazards and wear the appropriate footwear to insure protection against them.

NEED TO KNOW FACTS ABOUT SAFETY FOOTWEAR-

- ✓ You need to wear footwear that protects you from potential hazards and is mandated.
- ✓ If protective foot wear is mandated by the company, they need to implement a program that tells you the requirements such as: Selection, proper fitting, testing, training, and approval of all the types of footwear.
- ✓ Make sure that the sole is approved and appropriate for the particular conditions.
- ✓ Be aware of potential hazards and protect accordingly. For example, work conditions might make it hazardous for your toes. If so, be sure that you have steel-toed boots or shoes. If you are in an area where foot punctures are possible, make sure that you footwear has steel shanks.

CONSIDERATIONS TO LOOK FOR IN SAFETY BOOTS/SHOES-

Height of the boot/shoe – If there is a risk of welding sparks, dust, or chemicals in the field getting into your boots or shoes, then the height of your purchase should be considered.

Reinforced Safety Toe – Protects from heavy weight crushing the toes. Toe caps come in metal or hard plastic.

Sole Types – Not all soles are created equal. Different soles are available, so purchase the soles that best fit the conditions that you'll be working under.

Insulation – Depending upon what type of area you're working under, you might want to get insulated boots, especially if you are working in cold storage or cold outside areas.

Metatarsal Protection- Furnishes protection from the top of your foot (toes up to your ankle).

BOOTS - PROTECTION AGAINST CHEMICALS-

The nature of chemicals that you might be exposed to should govern the type of material in your boots or shoes. Some of the more common types of materials are:

- **Natural Rubber** – Extremely flexible material that stays supple in cold weather. Has good slip, cut and puncture resistance compared to PVC boots. It also resists acids, alcohols, and most water-soluble chemicals. Not recommended against oil-based chemicals and solvents.
- **Neoprene** – Extremely resistant to most animal fats, alkalies, oils, many acids, and caustics. Not as puncture or cut resistant as natural rubber.
- **PVC** – Good protection against animal fats, oils, alkalies, many acids, alcohol and petroleum hydrocarbons. Not recommended for use with most solvents, ketones and aldehydes.

All the above are tips to consider in the purchase of the right boot/shoe for your particular work conditions. However, fit and comfort, after you have selected the "right" footwear for your use, is imperative and critical.

A good boot/shoe will last you a long time when properly maintained, so be sure that they fit and are comfortable while you work. A bad fit is worse than having a bad headache. A headache will probably leave you with a little medication. But misfits in a work boot/shoe are like a bad day at the "OK Corral," trouble and more trouble that won't go away.'

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