

## “Toe-Tapping Tips for Better Foot Protection”

### Why It Matters:

- ☞ Foot-related injuries are more common than most people think – about 500 a day in U.S. workplaces.
- ☞ The majority of those injuries occur when workers aren’t wearing the right foot protection.
- ☞ The two major categories of work-related foot injuries are injuries from punctures, crushing, and lacerations; and injuries resulting from slips, trips, and falls, including sprains and broken bones.
- ☞ A single foot injury can cost your company thousands of dollars in medical bills and lost work time.

Most of your employees probably don’t think much about their feet – until a foot is injured or begins to hurt. Damage to even one bone, ligament, or muscle in the foot can be very painful and make it difficult or impossible for workers to keep on their feet and do their jobs.

**There are all kinds of hazards waiting for unprotected feet.** Foot injuries on the job can result from:

- Broken bones caused by heavy falling or rolling objects
- Bruises and stubbed toes caused by bumps
- Puncture wounds from sharp objects
- Sprains from slips, trips, and falls
- Amputations caused by machinery and tools
- Burns from hot or hazardous substances



**OSHA says make them wear the right protection for the job.** The regulations (Section 1910.136) require foot protection when there is a danger of foot injuries. Depending on the specific hazards, employees may need to wear special foot protection such as:

**WEAR IT!**

- Rubber or wooden-soled shoes for wet or slippery surfaces
- Reinforced impact-resistant work shoes or boots to protect feet and toes from being bruised or crushed
- Rubber or neoprene boots to protect against chemical hazards
- Metal insoles or reinforced soles to protect against punctures
- Nonconducting shoes, with no metal or nails, for working around electricity

**Foot-safe footwear prevents the agony of the feet.** Even when special protective footwear isn’t needed, work shoes or boots should:

- Fit comfortably, without slipping or pinching the foot or toes.
- Be solidly constructed of sturdy materials that can resist wear and tear.
- Provide good foot support.
- Have low heels and nonskid soles for good traction.
- Be in good condition, with no rips or holes.
- Fasten securely; laces shouldn’t drag on the floor.

**Put your best foot forward to prevent foot injuries.** Take the time to teach employees these general foot safety rules as well:

- Identify foot hazards for your job and select the proper foot protection.
- Always wear appropriate foot protection whenever there is a risk of foot injury.
- Keep alert to foot hazards and avoid careless or risky behavior that could result in a foot injury.
- Watch where you’re going and walk, don’t run, from place to place.
- Always pay attention to where you place both your feet.

