

## news & notes

### SAFETY SHOE SELECTION

Basic foot protection is a sturdy shoe or boot made of leather, rubber, or a synthetic. It has an impact-resistant toe—usually steel—and nonskid soles with rubber or synthetic treads to prevent slips and falls.

The American National Standard for safety-toe footwear referred to in the OSHA standard deals with the strength of the toe box. The top classification, 75, will withstand the impact of 75 pounds per square inch falling on your foot. As further protection in jobs where heavy objects could land on your feet, you might also wear footguards made of aluminum alloy, fiberglass, or galvanized steel over your shoes.

Other possible protections you may need in your shoes or boots are:

- Metal insoles or reinforced soles to protect against puncture
- Nonconducting soles and no nails in the shoes themselves if you work with electricity
- Rubber boots or shoes or leather shoes with wooden soles if you work in wet conditions
- Heat-resistant soles if you work in areas where the floor gets hot
- Easy-to-remove gaiters if you could get splashed by hot metal or by welding sparks
- Impermeable rubber or neoprene boots to wear over or instead of work boots if you work with corrosives or hazardous chemicals.



**"Those figures are accurate. We had 3.2 million foot injuries in the first quarter alone."**



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## Feet First

### *National Foot Health Awareness*

The National Safety Council reported that in a recent year there were 130,000 disabling foot injuries, plus another 40,000 toe injuries on the job. Most of those could have been prevented by wearing the proper shoes.

Because of these frequent injuries, OSHA's foot protection standard (29 CFR 1910.136) states that "Each affected employee shall wear protective footwear when working in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects, or objects piercing the sole, and where such employee's feet are exposed to electrical hazards."

The main hazards to your feet on the job are:

- Having heavy objects fall on them
- Having heavy objects roll on them
- Stubbing or banging your toes on something heavy

Another on-the-job hazard that doesn't usually cause foot injuries but is a result of not wearing the right shoes is slipping. There is also the possibility of burns or chemical contact if safety shoes don't fit correctly or aren't made of the right material to protect against the hazards of a particular job.

The type of footwear required by the standard—and common sense—obviously depends on the kinds of hazards you encounter on the job. You need sturdy shoes no matter what you do. But you also have to think about the specific hazards you face to decide what to wear on your feet.

You need protective shoes of some sort if there could be a risk of having something fall on your feet, roll over them, or bump them because you:

- Work with or around heavy equipment, *or*
- Do material handling.

You also need protection for your feet if you work:

- On wet surfaces
- With electricity
- Where nails or other sharp objects could puncture your shoes

Working with corrosives or hazardous substances requires foot protection, too, because those substances could penetrate normal shoes. And we all need protection from slipping and falling. See the sidebar for shoe selection tips.

## Safety Habits

Here are a few basic safety rules that should be practiced again and again until they become automatic:

- Report all accidents to your supervisor, even though they may seem minor at the time. Studying the causes of accidents points out ways in which they can be avoided in the future.
- Practice good housekeeping to prevent slips and falls - your own or anyone else's. Clean up spills, and keep all areas - especially heavily traveled ones - free of clutter.
- Knowing which type of fire extinguishers may be used safely on each class of fire. Use of the wrong type of extinguisher can cause serious injury. For example, you may receive a serious or fatal shock if you use water on an electrical fire.
- Use good body mechanics when lifting and moving objects. Get help when you need it and let your legs rather than your back do most of the work.
- Wear eye protection when needed: when there may be flying particles or when working with acids or harmful chemicals that might splash.
- Make sure electrical equipment is in good condition before using it. Have defective tools, cords, or other equipment tagged for repair. Do not touch outlets, switches, or electrical equipment with wet hands.

Share your own safe attitude and habits with your co-workers. Of course you will do this in a tactful way, but remembering that it is important for their safety and your own. No one can say when an unsafe condition or act will result in an accident, when an accident will result in injury, or when injury will cause permanent disability or even death. **So we must all resolve to work safely and never take chances with the life or health of ourselves or our fellow workers.**



# Spring Planting

## Working safely with pesticides

Exposure to pesticides can occur through eye or skin contact, respiratory contact (inhaling), or ingestion (swallowing). Symptoms may show up after one exposure (acute) or they may develop after repeated exposures (chronic).

You need to know the serious health problems pesticide poisoning can cause:

- Mild cases may cause headaches, nausea, skin irritation, and dizziness.
- Severe cases may cause fever, convulsions, loss of consciousness, and death.

Follow these precautions:

- Wear appropriate PPE.
- Obey entry restrictions and warning signs.
- Read labels on pesticide containers and MSDSs for pesticides you use.
- Handle pesticides in well-ventilated areas.
- Never store pesticides in food or drink containers.
- Never mix pesticides or drain a sprayer near a well, pond, or stream.
- Apply pesticides on a calm day to minimize the drift of pesticides.

If you are exposed to pesticides, you need to go immediately to the decontamination site and follow these emergency procedures.

- Wash with soap and water and use emergency eyewash for at least 15 minutes.
- Seek emergency treatment and have chemical label instructions available for use by medical team.

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## The Dangers of Distracted Driving

Vehicle fatalities have gone down steadily in recent years. This may be attributed to new cars, which have better safety features, including air bags. More drivers and passengers are using their seat belts. Unfortunately, however, increased use of electronic gadgets has increased the number of deaths caused by distracted driving.

Distracted driving is any nondriving activity that takes the driver's attention from the primary task of operating the vehicle and increases the risk of crashing. There are three main types of distraction:

- Visual - taking your eyes off the road
- Manual - taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive - taking your mind off your driving

Some of the common activities that can distract a driver are:

using a cell phone; eating, drinking, or grooming; talking to passengers; reading, including map reading; using a PDA or navigation system; watching a video; changing the radio station, CD, or MP3 player; and then there is texting.

**Be focused when you are driving! Don't become a statistic!**