Foot Safety – Its a Shoe in for Safety Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

The foot is something that doesn’t get much attention unless there is a problem. Therefore, to avoid possible injury, it’s important to think about safeguarding the foot before undertaking any job.

What’s the Danger

HAZARDOUS FOOT SAFETY CONDITIONS

There is no workplace where a worker is immune to foot injury. However, the hazards differ according to the workplace and the types of tasks the worker does. Foot injuries then can be prevented by assessing the hazards and looking for preventative measures.

- Separating mobile equipment from pedestrian traffic and installing safety mirrors and warning signs can decrease the number of incidents that might result in cut or crushed feet or toes.
- Proper guarding of machines such as chain saws or rotary mowers can avoid cuts or severed feet or toes.
- Effective housekeeping reduces the number of incidents at workplaces. For example, loose nails, other sharp objects, and littered walkways are hazards for foot injury.
- Using colour contrast and angular lighting to improve depth vision in complicated areas such as stairs, mps and passageways reduces the hazard of tripping and falling.
- Posting safety signs in conspicuous places where safety foot wear is required when there is a potential hazard from falling objects, sharp objects, etc.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

CAUSES OF WORK-RELATED FOOT INJURIES

Floor Design Can Improve Foot Safety

Aching, flat or tired feet are common among workers who spend most of their working time standing.

The most important goal of job design is to avoid fixed positions especially fixed standing positions. Good job design includes varied tasks requiring changes in body position and using different muscles. **Job rotation, job enlargement and team work** are all ways to make work easier on the feet.

Job rotation moves workers from one job to another. It distributes standing among a group of workers and shortens the time each individual spends standing. However, it must be a rotation where the worker does something completely different such as walking around or sitting at the next job.

Job enlargement includes more and different tasks in a worker's duties. If it increases the variety of body positions and motions, the worker has less chance of developing foot problems.

FOOTWEAR SELECTION – CONSIDER THE HAZARDS

Footwear must be chosen based on the hazards that are present. Assess the workplace and work activities for:

- Materials handled or used by the worker.
- Risk of objects falling onto or striking the feet.
- Any material or equipment that might roll over the feet.
- Any sharp or pointed objects that might cut the top of the feet.
- Objects that may penetrate the bottom or side of the foot.
- Possible exposure to corrosive or irritating substances.
- Possible explosive atmospheres including the risk of static electrical discharges.
- Risk of damage to sensitive electronic components or equipment due to the discharge of static electricity.

- Risk of coming into contact with energized conductors of low to moderate voltage (e.g., 220 volts or less).

HOW TO BUY FOOTWEAR FOR WORK

- Do not expect that footwear which 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.
- Ask a doctor’s advice if properly fitting shoes are not available.
- Consider using shock-absorbing insoles where the job requires walking or standing on hard floors.
- 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.
- The shoe must have a fastening across the instep to prevent the foot from slipping when walking.
- The heel should be not more than 60 mm (about 2.5 inches), and the heel should not be lower than the ball of the foot. (From CSA Z195:14 (R2019) Protective footwear)

SIMPLE RULES OF FOOTCARE

Workers can avoid many food disorders by following rules of foot care:

- Wash feet daily with soap, rinse thoroughly and dry, especially between the toes.
- Trim toenails straight across and not too short. Do not cut into the corners.
- Wear clean socks or stockings and change them daily.

DO NOT FORGET TO EXERCISE

To keep feet healthy, it is necessary to compensate for working in a stationary position. One action that can be done frequently on

the job is alternately to contract and relax the calf muscles, and flex and straighten ankles and knees.

FINAL WORD

Proper footwear is important, not only for foot comfort but also for one’s general well-being. Improper footwear can cause or aggravate existing foot problems. Unfortunately, being fashionable sometimes takes precedence over choosing well-fitting, supportive safety footwear. Many safety footwear manufacturers produce safety footwear that looks fashionable.