## Toolbox Talk - Safe Footwear

Toolbox Talks are intended to supplement training as safety and health discussions on the job site.

## <u>Introduction</u>

When we think safety we often forget about the importance of safe footwear. Footwear worn in the workplace can range from comfort and style to helping protect our feet from industrial hazards such as falling objects, heat and cold, wet and slippery surfaces, or even exposure to corrosive chemicals. In addition to protecting our feet they may help reduce the likelihood of tripping, slipping and falling.

## Employer Flexible Safety Library

Discussion Date: \_

Trainer:
Employee Participants:

The material in this document is provided for informational purposes only and not as a comprehensive or exhaustive resource on this topic. The toolbox should not be used as substitution for training but as a supplement to formal training.

## Tips to choose the right footwear for the job

Safety shoes and boots should match the hazardous conditions of the job.
Slip resistant soles should be worn if working around water or other slippery surfaces. Slips, trips and falls account for about 15 percent of all reported disabling injuries.
"Metal-toed" shoes or boots should be worn when there is a risk of falling objects striking the top of the foot. These steel-toed shoes provide extra protection over the top of the foot and can make a difference in preventing an accident. Impact protection should be worn when workers carry or handle materials such as heavy packages, objects, parts or tools and other activities where objects may fall onto the foot.
Puncture resistant shoes or boots should be required when a worker could step on sharp objects such as nails, wires, tacks, screws, large staples, scrap metal, or other objects that can penetrate less resistant material.
Special insulated or nonconductive shoes should be worn around electrical hazards.
A reinforced shank will help reduce some foot fatigue if standing on ladders for long periods of time.
All working footwear, for both men and women, whether it is safety wear or not, should provide comfort without compromising protective value. Shoes should not be purchased with the expectations that they will stretch. Shock absorbing soles should be considered when standing or walking on hard floors for long periods of time.
Other types of footwear requirements might be necessary if contact with chemicals, potentially infectious human body fluids, or human pathogens exist.

☐ Some less common considerations for safety footwear can include

Consider the work hazards that exist in your workplace and find the

protection from molten metals splashing on the foot or environmental conditions such as extreme heat/cold, and even bites from venomous



proper footwear for your type of work.

snakes.