

TST #138-A

Safety Footwear

OSHA's foot protection standard 1910.136(a) requires protective footwear to be worn when employees are "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." Foot protection is required for all operators on a sawing or drilling job – but what type of footwear should be chosen?

Protective footwear must comply with American National Standards Institute standard ANSI Z41-1991, which breaks safety footwear down into six categories:

- **Impact- and compression-resistance**, which uses a steel or nonmetallic toe cap to protect against falling objects or crushing from heavy rolling objects.
- **Metatarsal footwear**, which provides similar protection against falling objects to the area of the foot between the ankle and the toes.
- **Electrical hazard**, where the sole of the shoe or boot is designed to protect workers from electric shock from 600 volts or less, under dry conditions.
- **Conductive footwear**, which prevents the build-up of static electricity.
- **Puncture-resistance**, where the sole resists penetration from sharp objects.
- **Static-dissipative**, which reduces the buildup of static electricity by conducting body charge to the ground while protecting the employee from electrical hazards.

Check with a supervisor or manager to determine what type of safety footwear is recommended for your specific type of work.

How to Make Sure Shoes Fit

Measure both feet. To get the best sizing information, measure from the toe to the heel, the ball of the foot to the heel and then the width. Try both shoes on and walk around, if possible.

Try shoes on in the afternoon. After being on your feet all day, feet can swell and expand. If you notice a sensitive area when trying on a shoe during that time of the day, try a different shoe or style.

Wear a normal work sock. If you wear a thicker or thinner sock at the time of selection, it could result in the choice of a shoe that is too small or too big.

How to Make Sure Shoes Last

Rotate between old and new shoes. When you get to three months with a new pair of shoes, go get another pair and begin rotating them. Both pairs will last longer and be more comfortable.

Keep footwear clean. After use, safety footwear should be cleaned with soap, water and a cloth or brush, depending on the type of shoes and how dirty they are.

Keep leather supple. If safety footwear is made of leather, use shoe grease or shoe oil to prevent drying and cracking. Be sure to consult the manufacturer's instructions first.

Safety Footwear Quiz

The following statements should be answered with “True” or “False.” Answers below.

1. Conductive footwear prevents the build-up of static electricity.
2. Electrical shoes and boots can prevent an electrical shock of 2,500 volts in wet or dry conditions.
3. Metatarsal footwear provides protection against falling objects damaging the metatarsal bone in the foot.
4. The OSHA Standard of reference for foot protection is OSHA 1910.136.
5. Protective footwear must comply with ANSI Standard Z41-1991.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Answers:

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True