

Footwear toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Footwear.

The right footwear for the job is important to prevent injuries and to keep our feet comfortable. Hazards that our feet can be exposed to in the workplace include falling objects, sharp objects underfoot, chemicals, water, heat and cold. The right footwear can also prevent accidents from slips, trips and falls. Protective footwear is designed to protect our feet from hazards like sharp objects, heat, cold, falling objects, and more. Now would be a good time to make sure your protective footwear is in great condition!

Why run this toolbox:

- Understand how injuries or discomfort to feet can occur
- Identify what types of footwear are the best for the job
- Understand how to look after our footwear

Choosing the right footwear for the job

- Identify the hazards of the job and then select the footwear. For example if 'falling objects' are a hazard then footwear with protective toe caps should be used.
- Choose footwear with slip resistant soles, especially if working around water or on slippery surfaces.
- Soles should be puncture resistant if there is a risk of stepping on nails, scrap metal or other objects that could penetrate the foot.
- If you are working around electrical hazards, specialist non-conductive footwear should be worn
- If you are on your feet for a long time, consider effective shock absorbing soles.
- Specialist footwear may be required if there are hazards such as molten metal, deep water, mud, chemicals, extreme cold or infectious human body fluids.

Getting the right fit

- Make sure footwear fits snugly at the heel and has enough space in front of the toes.
- Take the socks you will be wearing on the job when you are fitting new footwear.
- Remember that your feet normally swell over the course of the day and during exercise.

Keeping your feet safe

- Identify foot hazards for the task/job and make sure you have the right footwear.
- Watch where you're going and what you're stepping on.
- Ensure you have ankle support and lace up boots if the task requires it.
- Make sure your laces are securely tied.
- Take care of your safety footwear and keep it clean and leather moisturised.
- Replace when it is worn or defective.

Key takeaways:

- *Your feet are precious, protect them*
- *Understand the hazards that can harm your feet.*
- *Select the right footwear for the job.*
- *Get the right fit.*
- *Look after your footwear and replace when it's not doing its job.*

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