

Know Your Feet

Our feet are comprised of 26 bones for support and 38 joints for movement in each foot. Our feet also have blood vessels, ligaments, muscles, and nerves, which is why it hurts so much when we drop something on them or stub our toe. Protective footwear is designed to protect our feet from hazards like sharp objects, heat, cold, falling objects, slippery surfaces, or exposure to corrosive chemicals.

Foot Injuries in Saskatchewan

A large portion of work-related foot injuries can be broken down into two categories:

- Punctures, crushing, sprains and lacerations
- Slips, trips and falls

For the Residential (B11), Commercial (B12), and Industrial (B13) Building Construction rate codes, there was a total of 80 foot injuries reported to the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board in 2016 alone. From 2012-2016, there was a total of 532 claims for those rate codes out of a total 4,579 foot injuries reported.

Footwear Safety Ratings

There are many forms and styles of foot protection available on the market, anything from rubber boots, running shoes, dress shoes, winter boots, hiking boots, metatarsal protection to boots built with 4", 6" and 8" ankle protection. Once you have a style picked for the task at hand, it is important to know how the ratings are structured.

Visit workauthority.ca/pages/safety-symbol-index for a complete list of protective safety symbols.



Legislation

According to Section 7-11 in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 a construction site is deemed to be a place where a worker is exposed to a risk from a heavy or falling object or who may tread on a sharp object and must use approved protective footwear. An employer or contractor shall also ensure that:

- a worker uses footwear that is appropriate to the risks associated with the worker's place of employment and occupation
- a worker who may be at risk from a heavy or falling object or who may tread on a sharp object uses approved protective footwear
- outer foot guards are provided if there is substantial risk of a crushing injury to the foot of a worker; and approved protective footwear if the feet of a worker may be endangered by hot, corrosive, or toxic substances

Proper Footwear for the Hazard

Assess the workplace and work activities for:

- type of walking surface and environmental conditions workers may be exposed to (e.g., loose ground cover, smooth surfaces, temperature, wet/oily, chemicals, etc.)
- risk of coming into contact with energized conductors of low to moderate voltage (e.g., 220volts or less)
- risk of objects falling onto or striking the feet
- any material or equipment that might roll over, cut, puncture, or penetrate the feet



Tool Box Talk

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.