

# Tool Box Talk



# LEG SAFETY

October 2017

Every worksite has hazards that come with the work being done. These hazards have the potential to cause injuries on a daily basis. The leg is often the part of the body that takes most of the work load and therefore is susceptible to injury.

In the leg there are some of the largest and most durable muscles and tendons in the body. Muscles and tendons are the connective tissues that attach to our bone structure and allow us to work, play, and move freely. The three parts of the leg that get injured the most are the knee, the Achilles tendon, and the ankle.

## Common Ways of Injuring the Leg

- ✘ Getting on and off equipment, such as trucks, heavy machinery, and ladders. Falling off of equipment. Not using *three points of contact*.
- ✘ Getting crushed or pinched by equipment.
- ✘ Planting the foot and getting it caught so the foot can not move with the rest of the leg.
- ✘ Slipping on wet or slippery surfaces.
- ✘ Tripping due to tripping hazards or poor housekeeping.
- ✘ Wearing the wrong type of footwear or footwear that has worn out. This can cause the ligaments and muscles in the leg to be out of alignment and cause unnecessary tension.
- ✘ Sitting for long periods of time.



## Preventing Leg Injuries

The following tips may prevent leg injuries:

- ✘ Stretch before and after physical exercise or work activities to warm up your muscles.
- ✘ Use the correct techniques or positions during activities so that you do not strain your muscles.

- ✘ Use equipment appropriate to your size, strength, and ability. Avoid repeated movements that can cause injury (repetitive strain injury).
- ✘ Do not carry objects that are too heavy. Use a step stool. Do not stand on chairs or other unsteady objects.
- ✘ When working, wear the correct footwear that is made for the job you are doing.
- ✘ Maintain good housekeeping and keep travel ways clear of trip hazards.
- ✘ Be aware of your surroundings and other equipment on the worksite. Keep a safe distance from, and be mindful of, all hazards on the worksite.

## How to Treat Sprains

A sprain is damage to the ligament. It varies from simply stretched or slightly torn to completely torn. In many cases you can first use the **RICE** method to treat a sprain injury:

**Rest** – You may need to use crutches until you can walk without pain.

**Ice** – For at least the first 24 to 72 hours or until the swelling goes down, apply an ice pack for 10 to 20 minutes every hour or two during the day. Always keep a thin cloth between the ice and your skin and press the ice pack firmly against all the curves of the affected area.

**Compression** – An elastic compression wrap, such as a tensor bandage, will help reduce swelling. You wear it for the first 24 to 36 hours. Compression wraps do not offer protection. So you also need a brace to protect your ankle if you try to put weight on it.

**Elevation** – Raise your ankle above the level of your heart for 2 to 3 hours a day if possible. This helps to reduce swelling and bruising.

If you push yourself too much before your muscle tendon injury fully heals, you could get injured again and the pain could become a long-lasting problem.



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# How To Use This Resource

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](http://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](http://www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf)

## ABOUT THE SASKATCHEWAN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded non-profit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees throughout the province. Companies that are registered with Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and fall under the CLASS B – BUILDING CONSTRUCTION rate class are members of the SCSA. SCSA members and supporter members receive preferred pricing on classroom training year-round. The SCSA equips more than 10,000 workers each year with the education and training they need to achieve their organization's safety goals.



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