

Tool Box Talk

Foot Protection

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 toes.

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 occur in 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 of 4,579 foot injuries reported.



Footwear Safety Ratings

There are many forms and styles of foot protection available on the market. 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.

For a complete list of footwear safety symbols and additional information on foot safety, visit:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/reports/feet.html>

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 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 a 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., 220 volts 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

