SAFETY SHOE SELECTION

Basic foot protection is a sturdy shoe or boot made of leather, rubber, or a synthetic. It has an impact-resistant toe—usually steel—and nonskid soles with rubber or synthetic treads to prevent slips and falls.

The American National Standard for safety-toe footwear deals with the strength of the toe box. The top classification, 75, will withstand the impact of 75 pounds per square inch falling on your foot. As further protection in jobs where heavy objects could land on your feet, you might also wear footguards made of aluminum alloy, fiberglass, or galvanized steel over your shoes.

Other possible protections you may need in your shoes or boots are:

- Metal insoles or reinforced soles to protect against puncture
- Nonconducting soles and no nails in the shoes themselves if you work with electricity
- Rubber boots or shoes or leather shoes with wooden soles if you work in wet conditions
- Heat-resistant soles if you work in areas where the floor gets hot
- Easy-to-remove gaiters if you could get splashed by hot metal or by welding sparks
- Impermeable rubber or neoprene boots to wear over or instead of work boots if you work with corrosives or hazardous chemicals.

Feet First

The National Safety Council reported that in a recent year there were 130,000 disabling foot injuries, plus another 40,000 toe injuries on the job. Most of those could have been prevented by wearing the proper shoes.

Because of these frequent injuries, employees are encouraged to wear protective footwear when working in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects, or objects piercing the sole, and where employees' feet are exposed to electrical hazards.

The main hazards to your feet on the job are:

- Having heavy objects fall on them
- Having heavy objects roll on them
- Stubbing or banging your toes on something heavy

Another on-the-job hazard that doesn’t usually cause foot injuries but is a result of not wearing the right shoes is slipping. There is also the possibility of burns or chemical contact if safety shoes don’t fit correctly or aren’t made of the right material to protect against the hazards of a particular job.

The type of footwear required by the standard—and common sense—obviously depends on the kinds of hazards you encounter on the job. You need sturdy shoes no matter what you do. But you also have to think about the specific hazards you face to decide what to wear on your feet.

You need protective shoes of some sort if there could be a risk of having something fall on your feet, roll over them, or bump them because you:

- Work with or around heavy equipment, or
- Do material handling.

You also need protection for your feet if you work:

- On wet surfaces
- With electricity
- Where nails or other sharp objects could puncture your shoes

Working with corrosives or hazardous substances requires foot protection, too, because those substances could penetrate normal shoes. And we all need protection from slipping and falling.

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Most bicycle accidents involve a head injury. In fact, each year in the United States, about half a million children are seriously injured in bicycle-related accidents, and most of those injuries could have been avoided if a helmet was worn. Keep the following in mind when buying a bicycle helmet: (1) Pick bright colors that are visible to drivers and other cyclists; (2) Look for a well-ventilated helmet; (3) Make sure the helmet has a CPSC or Snell sticker inside. These indicate that the helmet meets the standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or the Snell Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit group that tests helmet safety; (4) Make sure helmets fit correctly and can be adjusted.
HAND-HELD VS. HANDS-FREE

A recent study finds that motorists who talk on hands-free cell phones are:
• 18 percent slower in braking
• 17 percent slower to regain the speed they lost when they braked
• Less likely to recall seeing pedestrians, billboards, or other roadside features

One study contrasted the effects of hand-held and hands-free cell phone conversations on responses to traffic signals in a simulated driving task. Control groups listened to the radio or a book-on-tape while performing the simulated driving task.

• The data demonstrated that the phone conversation itself resulted in significant slowing in the response to simulated traffic signals, as well as an increase in the likelihood of missing these signals.
• The fact that hand-held and hands-free cell phones resulted in equivalent deficits indicates that the interference was not due to distractions such as holding the phone.
• These findings also rule out interpretations that attribute the deficits from cell phone conversations to simply verbal attention, because deficits were not observed in the book-on-tape control.
• Active engagement in the cell phone conversation appears to be necessary to produce the attention deficits.

The principal findings are that:
1. Drivers engaged in cell phone conversations missed twice as many simulated traffic signals as when they were not talking on the cell phone.
2. Drivers took longer to react to those signals that they did detect.
3. These deficits were equivalent for both hand-held and hands-free cell phone users.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...
• In one recent year, high blood pressure was the primary or contributing cause in more than 315,000 deaths in the United States.
• Estimates are that high blood pressure and its related health problems will cost the U.S. economy almost $75 billion this year.
• More than one quarter of U.S. adults have prehypertension.

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH ANSWERS:
1). A lighthouse
2). On a baseball field
3). A bass
4). George Washington, the father of our country
5). Noise

How much do you know about foot safety?
1. Job-related foot hazards include having heavy objects roll or fall on feet and stubbing or banging toes. True False
2. Protective footwear should be worn in areas where foot injuries are possible. True False
3. You don’t need foot protection if you work on hot floors. True False
4. Protective footwear’s impact-resistant toes are usually steel. True False
5. To prevent slips and falls, shoes should have: a. Steel toes b. Nonskid soles
7. Wear footguards over shoes in areas where heavy objects may fall on feet. True False
8. Sandals are acceptable work shoes. True False
9. For work with corrosives, the best footwear is impermeable boots made of: a. Leather or plastic b. Steel c. Rubber or neoprene
10. Even if a job doesn’t require protective footwear, you should wear shoes with low heels and nonskid soles. True False

Answers

OFFICE TIPS...
* Never leave your wallet, bag or purse, or other items of value unsecured and unattended (even in your own office).
* Do not leave keys, cash or other valuables in your desk drawers.

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH
"Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble..."
Frank Tyger

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...
John saw Bill studying a chess board.
"Whoever heard of a dog that could play chess? That's the smartest dog I've ever seen."
"Oh, I don't know about that," said Bill, "I've beaten him three games out of four!"

Driving Distraction
How cell phones distract
The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that they receive more complaints and requests for information about cell phone use than any other driving issue. Part of the reason is because cell phone users are readily visible to other drivers, at least in the handheld mode. In fact, it’s probably safe to say that almost every driver has either had a near-crash experience with a cell phone user or has witnessed risky behavior of some sort. The concerns about the safety of such driving are growing.

Human factor experts tell us that there are four kinds of driving distractions:
1. Visual. Looking away from the roadway would be an example of this.
2. Biomechanical. An example is manipulating a control, such as dialing a phone or adjusting a radio, and can often be associated with a visual distraction.
3. Auditory, such as being startled by a ringing phone.
4. Cognitive. An example would be the common experience of traveling from point A to point B and suddenly realizing that we aren’t sure how we got there or what happened in between. Being “lost in thought” or being in focused conversation with someone causes us to withdraw from situational awareness.

Researchers are obtaining evidence that shifting from handheld to hands-free phone use while driving does not result in eliminating all cell phone distractions. It addresses the visual and mechanical distractions but does not address auditory and cognitive issues.