

## news & notes

### 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 referred to in the OSHA standard 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.

# EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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## Feet First

### National Foot Health Awareness Month

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, OSHA's foot protection standard (29 CFR 1910.136) states that "Each affected employee shall 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 such employee's 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. See the sidebar for shoe selection tips.



**"Those figures are accurate. We had 3.2 million foot injuries in the first quarter alone."**

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### TAKE CONTROL!

April is **Stress Awareness Month**. People often feel the most stressed when they are not in control of their daily activities—and this happens most frequently at work.

Take control of your work routine by following these stress-reducing tips:

1. **Plan.** Control your time by taking the first 5 minutes to lay out your day's work, and the last 5 minutes to plan tomorrow's work. Of course, unexpected situations may arise, but working them as much as possible into your plan will help you feel more in control and less stressed.
2. **Organize.** Control your workspace and environment by keeping it neat and organized.
3. **Itemize.** Control large projects by breaking them down into smaller tasks that you can tackle one at a time.
4. **Separate.** Control work/life balance by leaving work at work. Use your ride home to switch into family and personal gears.

### LISTEN UP!

*Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble.*  
—Frank Tyger

*When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.*  
—Ernest Hemingway

*It is the province of knowledge to speak and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.*  
—Oliver Wendell Holmes



# Volunteer Time

## *Pay it forward*

**National Volunteer Week** happens every year as an annual time to recognize the millions of volunteers who give countless hours of service in their communities every year. Begun in 1974 by President Richard Nixon, this week has been celebrated every year by U.S. presidents as well as many governors, mayors, and other elected officials.

This is also a great time for you to consider volunteering. Many employers encourage volunteerism by their employees to be good neighbors in their communities.

Employers also add volunteer programs to their wellness programs because helping others has been shown to lower stress and bring better mental health through a sense of well-being and usefulness.

Talk to your HR rep or wellness program coordinator for company-sponsored volunteer programs.

You can also check out [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org) and [www.1-800-volunteer.org](http://www.1-800-volunteer.org) to find volunteer opportunities in your area.

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# Asbestos Hazards

## *How to protect yourself*

Friable (loose and crumbly) asbestos is very hazardous. Inhaling asbestos fibers can cause lung cancer and other serious illnesses.

Follow these safety rules for working around asbestos:

- Always check for asbestos warning labels and signs and take the necessary precautions.
- If you're not sure if something contains asbestos, ASK!
- Never cut, hammer, or otherwise damage asbestos-containing materials.
- Use ventilation systems, enclosures, wet processes, and other protections to prevent release of asbestos fibers.
- Wear respirators and other required PPE.
- Never wear your contaminated clothing outside the work area.
- Make sure you don't contaminate clean areas or street clothing with asbestos.
- Treat any dust or waste that could contain asbestos carefully. Wet it when possible and use a HEPA vacuum to clean it up.
- Dispose of asbestos-contaminated clothing and waste in proper labeled, sealed containers.
- Don't smoke if you work around asbestos— better yet, don't smoke at all!
- Cooperate with air monitoring and medical surveillance programs. They're designed to protect you.



