



## TOOLBOX TRAINING: CHOOSING THE CORRECT SAFETY SHOES

### SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use toolbox trainings to spark safety discussions during monthly meetings with employees
- Submit the employee sign-in sheet to your designated administrative assistant /training coordinator as a record of training

From slip resistant footwear to steel-toe boots, protecting your feet at work properly is vital to your safety and health. Choosing a safety shoe can become overwhelming due to the large variety of products throughout the market. More importantly, choosing appropriately sized shoes can make or break its effectiveness. Shoes that are too small or too big can lead to problems, so ensure your footwear is properly fitted.

Foot protection is required if you are exposed to any of the following and is specific to the hazard:

- Falling & Rolling Objects
- Chemical Hazards
- Biological Hazards
- Compression Hazards
- Electrical Hazards
- Puncture Hazards



Here are some helpful tips to guarantee your shoe fits!

### 1. Swell your feet!

Throughout the day, the foot naturally becomes swollen with more blood. To ensure a proper fit, shop for new safety shoes towards the end of the day when the foot is at its largest. Since you will be working in these shoes and most likely on your feet the majority of time you wear them, it is necessary to closely mimic work-like conditions to ensure comfort.



### 2. Tie Them Up

When trying out prospective shoes, always tie them as if you were going to work. You wouldn't wear your shoes untied on the job, would you? Simulate your work environment as close as possible, testing the shoes for grip and protection - with them laced, of course.

### 3. Do Not Assume a Size

There is a vast assortment of safety shoe brands; however, the actual sizing differs depending on the manufacturer. Just because you are a size 9 in one brand of steel toe boots, does not mean you are a size 9 in all brands. Try on different sizes from multiple brands to make certain you choose the best safety shoe for the job.



### 4. Wear the correct socks!

Wear the type of socks you wear on the jobsite to the shoe store. Doing so will ensure that properly fitted safety shoes are purchased. Otherwise you risk the chance of your new safety shoes being too tight (if try them on wearing socks that are thinner than your normal work socks) or too loose (if you try them on wearing thicker socks than your normal work socks). Improperly fitted shoes can lead to blisters and other health risks.



### 5. Use the infamous “finger test.”

With any pair of shoes, it is recommended that you are able to fit your index finger between the heel of your foot and the heel of the shoe, as well as the top of your foot and the tongue of the shoe. This test ensures that you have proper "wiggle room" to comfortably move throughout your work day.



### 6. Replace Safety Shoes Accordingly

When safety shoes are at the end of their life span, do not continue to wear them-**REPLACE THEM!** A major reason is that the shoes do not adequately protect the feet if they are not in good condition. If your safety shoes are in disrepair, they need to be replaced.



The bottom line is that from work boots to slip-resistant shoes, choosing the proper work shoe is important. The effectiveness of a safety shoe is dependent upon various factors, but most important is ensuring that the shoe is the appropriate size. Use the tips outlined above to make certain that the next safety shoe you choose is as effective as the shoes you end up buying.

**REMEMBER: HINDSIGHT EXPLAINS THE INJURY THAT FORESIGHT WOULD HAVE PREVENTED**

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### Questions for Discussion:

1. **Safety shoes are required if you are exposed to the following hazards, except:**
  - a. Chemical Hazards
  - b. Falling & Rolling Objects
  - c. Office Environments
  - d. Biohazards

*The correct answer is C: Office Environments. Safety shoes are required if an employee is exposed to the following hazards: falling & rolling Objects, chemical hazards, biological hazards, compression hazards, electrical hazards, or puncture hazards. Typically, you will not be exposed to these hazards if you primarily work within an office environment.*

2. **True or False: If I wear a size 10 safety shoe in one brand, I wear a size 10 in all brands of safety shoes.**

*The correct answer is False. Shoe sizing may vary for different manufacturers. Therefore, it is important to always try on all safety shoes prior to purchase to ensure a proper fit.*

3. **True or False: It is better to try on safety shoes at the beginning of the day rather than at the end of a day.**

*The correct answer is False. The foot naturally swells with blood throughout the day. Therefore, it is better to try on safety shoes at the end of the day when your foot is at its largest.*

