

TOOL BOX TALKS

Footwear for Concrete Floors

There are two major groupings of traumatic foot injuries. One group includes injuries like punctures, lacerations and crushing. The second group includes injuries sustained during a slip and fall, like fractures, strains and sprains. But, other very common problems are calluses, ingrown toenails and quite simply, tired feet. Discomfort and pain increase the onset of fatigue, which is proven as a contributing factor to incidents. Review these safety tips!

WORKSAFE TIPS

BACKGROUND

- There is no workplace where workers are not exposed to foot injury.
- Surveys suggest that two out of every three workers suffers from a foot problem.
- Foot problems are so common, they can be seen in any industry, in any facility.
- Hard, unyielding floors like concrete are the least comfortable surfaces to work on.
- Working on a hard floor has the impact of a hammer, pounding the heel at every step.
- Slippery floors are hazardous for slips and falls that can result in sprained ankles or broken foot bones.

IMPROPER FOOTWEAR FOR CONCRETE

- Footwear that fits poorly or is in of repair also contributes heavily to foot discomfort.
- Pointed toes and high heels are particularly inappropriate for working footwear.
- Not knowing about the need for foot protection in workplaces like schools or offices can play a role in the onset of foot problems.

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

- Take frequent, short breaks often.
- Learn and do other jobs, which allows for new and different body positions.
- Alternate job duties with other employees.
- Job rotation between standing and sitting jobs reduces overall hard floor exposure.
- Install anti-fatigue matting.

BEST PRACTICES

- Standing or working on a hard, unyielding floor can cause a lot of discomfort.
- Wood, cork, carpeting, or rubber - flexibility - is gentler on workers' feet than concrete.
- Where resilient floors are not practical, footwear with thick, insulating, shock-absorbing insoles can alleviate discomfort.
- Anti-fatigue matting can also be useful wherever workers have to stand or walk.
- Anti-fatigue mats provide a cushioning which reduces foot fatigue.

PURCHASING QUALITY FOOTWEAR

- The inner side of the shoe must be straight from the heel to the end of the big toe.
- The shoe must grip the heel firmly.
- The forepart must allow freedom of movement for the toes.
- The shoe must have a fastening across the instep to prevent slipping when walking.
- The shoe must have a low, wide-based heel; flat shoes are recommended.
- People buying footwear for work should take the following advice:
- Do not expect that footwear which is too tight will stretch with wear.
- Have both feet measured when buying shoes. Feet normally differ in size.
- Buy shoes to fit the bigger foot.
- Buy shoes late in the afternoon when feet are likely to be swollen to maximum size.
- Get a doctor's advice if properly fitting shoes are not available.
- Consider using shock-absorbing insoles where the job requires walking or standing on hard floors.



Smart, Accident-Free Environments

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