

## Safety boots

### Why it's important

Even a minor foot injury can cause extreme pain, and lost time on a job. That's why it's extremely important to wear proper-fitting safety footwear. It can protect you from rolling objects, punctures, chemicals, slips, twisted ankles and electric shock.

Improper footwear can cause you to work slowly, make mistakes and eventually injure yourself. That's why it's important to deal with any foot discomfort as soon as it arises.

### How to control the hazards

#### The way to wear boots

- The foot and ankle have the important function of supporting your entire body weight and providing leverage when you're walking. Boots that are 6-8 inches high should be fully laced up to support the ankle joint. Sprained ankles often occur when the boot has not been laced up fully.
- Dangling laces and open tongues on footwear can also be a safety hazard, which is another reason your footwear should be laced all the way up.
- Make sure you are not changing the safety features of the footwear when an insole is required. Anti-static qualities can be altered or rendered ineffective when insoles are added.

#### Wear and maintenance

- Worn-out uppers on footwear will not provide the same amount of support as newer ones.
- Worn-out toe caps may not provide the same level of protection if something is dropped or falls on your toes.
- It's important to regularly inspect your footwear for signs of wear and tear, keeping in mind the type of work you are doing. Replace footwear as needed.

#### Buying tips

- Make sure you are buying the correct footwear for the job you are doing.

- Check for proper CSA tags on the right side of the boot
- Bring along any insoles, orthotic supports and the type of socks you are planning to wear when trying on footwear.
- Try on footwear towards the end of the day, as your foot will be swollen and this will ensure a proper fit.
- Boots should fit snugly around the ankle and foot, but they should also be comfortable
- Your heels should not slip up and down.
- There should be a distance from your toes to the front of the protective cap of approximately 1.25 cm (half-inch) when you are standing up and your footwear is properly laced up. The toe cap should allow for your toes to move around.
- Slip-resistant soles (such as Vibram soles) are another important feature because of the increased risk of slips and falls in all forestry sectors depending on the weather and the time of year. These types of soles have been able to reduce many slip/fall injuries.
- Put the boots on at home, wear them around and make sure they are truly comfortable. If they aren't comfortable, bring them back and either exchange or return them.

### Show and tell

Use a newer safety boot to talk about the different features of the boot and why it's important to regularly inspect work boots and replace them as needed.

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