



# Manufacturing Risk Advisor

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### The Importance of Safety Shoes

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Personal protective equipment (PPE) is crucial when it comes to preventing injuries and ensuring the health and safety of your employees. One often overlooked and important type of PPE is safety footwear, which is designed to protect feet from common manufacturing hazards.

Depending on the job activity and equipment your employees use, the following exposures could lead to serious foot injuries:

- Corrosive materials
- Electrical hazards
- Hot or slippery surfaces
- Static electricity, which could cause an explosion under the right conditions
- Heavy objects, which could fall or roll onto the feet, crushing them
- Sharp objects, which could puncture the feet
- Molten metal, which could splash onto the feet and cause burns and other injuries

When these risks are present in the workplace, employees must wear protective footwear to ensure safety and reduce injury risks. The following are safety shoes common in manufacturing that can be used to protect workers:

- **Steel-toe, reinforced safety-toe or reinforced toecap shoes**—These types of shoes are designed to protect against crushing injuries caused by falling

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or dropped objects. For extra protection, metatarsal guards can be used, which help safeguard the bones between the toes and ankle.

- **Puncture-resistant shoes**—These shoes are typically reinforced with metal and are designed to prevent injury should an employee step on a nail, screw or other sharp object.
- **Metal-free footwear**—These types of shoes are nonconductive and protect against electrocution risks. In general, these types of shoes can provide protection for up to 600 volts of electricity in dry environments. It should be noted that moisture and wear can impact the effectiveness of these kinds of safety shoes.
- **Nonslip soles (rubber or wooden)**—Slip-resistant shoes are equipped with a specialized sole that can reduce slip, trip and fall risks. These shoes are especially common in shop environments where cords, materials and other items increase trip hazards.
- **Insulated footwear**—These shoes are designed to protect feet against extreme temperatures. It should be noted that there are specific shoes for both hot and cold environments. Furthermore, risks related to chemical burns require specially treated shoes.

There are several factors that determine what type of footwear is appropriate for your employees, including the potential hazards they're exposed to, the machinery they use and the requirements of their position.

Regardless of the type of safety shoes used, it's important that employees ensure they fit properly and are well maintained. Safety shoes should also be inspected before each use for signs of wear. If a shoe is cracked or shows other signs of damage, employees should replace it immediately.

For more risk management strategies, contact Connell Insurance, Inc. today.