

Foot and leg injuries can happen when heavy objects fall or roll onto the feet, sharp materials penetrate footwear, or workers are exposed to heat, chemicals, electrical hazards, or slippery surfaces.

- Ordinary work shoes or boots may not provide enough protection. Protective footwear must fit properly and be appropriate for the work being performed and the walking and working surfaces encountered.
- Even protective footwear can contribute to trips, loss of footing, or discomfort when it does not fit correctly or is poorly suited to the job.



Foot and leg protection is available in several forms. The right choice depends on where the potential injury could occur and what type of hazard is present.

- **Safety shoes and boots** can provide impact and compression protection and may be available with additional features for puncture, heat, electrical, or other hazards.
- **Metatarsal guards** protect the upper part of the foot from impact and compression. They may be built into protective footwear or, for some applications, worn over the footwear.
- **Toe guards** fit over the toe area of certain footwear to provide additional impact and compression protection.
- **Leggings** help protect the lower legs and feet from heat hazards such as welding sparks and molten metal. Some leggings have quick-release fasteners so they can be removed quickly if hot material becomes trapped.
- **Foot and shin guards** provide additional coverage when hazards extend above the foot and ankle.
- **Additional specialized footwear** may be necessary for work involving chemicals, molten materials, extreme temperatures, or other hazards. Use protection intended for the particular material and exposure involved.

Protective footwear can only provide protection when it is in good condition and used correctly.

- Inspect footwear and other foot or leg protection regularly and before use.
- Keep footwear and leg protection clean and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace protective footwear and leg protection when damage or wear could reduce effectiveness.
- Never assume that a safety-toe boot provides electrical, puncture, chemical, heat, or static-control protection unless it is specifically designed and marked for that purpose.
- Check the footwear markings, instructions, or manufacturer information to make sure the footwear is designed for the hazards present.



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