

TOOLBOX TALK #11

CHOOSING PROPER FOOTWEAR

Wearing the wrong kind of foot protective footwear on the job can cause discomfort, calluses, ingrown toenails and generally tired feet.

Before purchasing any footwear for work, determine what hazards are present at your jobsite, the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI/DWC) advises. Do you need high-cut boots to protect against sparks and chemicals? Does your jobsite require reinforced steel toe caps to protect against heavy objects falling on your feet? Perhaps you need non-slip footwear due to slippery conditions. Additionally, if safety footwear is required at your workplace, employers should have a foot protection program in place.

TDI/DWC recommends following these tips when choosing and caring for footwear:

- Walk around in the shoes to be sure they fit properly and are comfortable to wear.
- Make sure your toes have plenty of room – at least half an inch from the front.
- Allow extra room for socks and arch supports when trying on footwear.
- Ensure shoes fit closely around the heel and ankle when laced up.
- Apply a water-resistant coating, if necessary.
- Regularly inspect your footwear for signs of wear and tear. If you notice damage, repair or replace them.

Additional information on caring for your feet, provided by TDI/DWC includes:

- Wash your feet daily with soap to help avoid skin and toenail conditions.
- Keep your toenails trimmed.
- Always wear clean socks.
- Wear shoes made of leather or canvas. Avoid synthetic materials.
- Have several pairs of shoes available to wear, if possible, and rotate wearing them to allow the shoes to air out.
- Use foot powder if you are prone to sweaty feet.
- Seek professional medical help if you suffer from persistent calluses, ingrown toenails, corns or fungal infections.

