



Steel-Toed Shoe Toolbox Talk

Overview

Breweries have heavy items being lifted and forklifts moving around. You must consider the safety of your employees and understand the natural resistance employees have and the devastating/permanent results from an injury to your employees' feet.

Why Wear Steel Toed Shoes?

Kegs can weigh anywhere from 75 lbs to 150 lbs. Forklifts can weigh from 1,000 lbs to 12,000 lbs. 55-gallon drums can weigh over 450 lbs. Totes can weigh over 1,200 lbs. Cases, skids, and buckets of chemicals can be dropped. All of these can seriously injure your employees' feet.

Here are common employee concerns and methods for addressing those concerns:

1. "If I drop something on my feet the steel toe will chop off my toes."
Answer: If you are not wearing steel toed shoes and that same object is dropped on your foot—your foot is crushed. Crushed cannot be saved. In most cases, the steel toe will prevent serious injury.
2. "Steel toed shoes look like clown shoes."
Answer: That used to be true—no longer. You can get steel-toed sneakers, dress shoes, and packs.
3. "Steel toed shoes get cold quickly in the winter and in cellars and they are heavy."
Answer: That is true—but only when the steel toe is steel. Get a composite toe instead and an insulated boot. It will not get so cold. As for the heaviness, composite toes are much lighter.
4. "It wears holes in my socks, they are uncomfortable, and/or they are too narrow/wide."
Answer: You have the wrong size shoe, the wrong brand, or you are not

wearing them properly. You need to be fitted by someone who knows the brands, knows how to fit them properly, and can advise you on the proper shoe that fits your needs.

5. "My steel-toed shoes end up stinking and I do not like that."

Answer: You may need 2 pairs of steel toed shoes. During the course of 8 hours you sweat about 1 oz into each shoe (8 oz in 8 hours). Wear one shoe this week and the other next week and they will last longer.

6. "What is the best way to ensure a proper steel-toed shoe selection besides having a knowledgeable person fitting me?"

Answer: Be aware that one foot is larger than the other and that your feet are larger at night than in the morning. When shopping for shoes:

- a. Always try both shoes on for proper fit.
- b. In the morning wear thin socks and in the evening heavy socks. Then wear medium thickness socks to work.

7. "What type of shoe do we need in a wet environment?"

Answer: You need slip resistant shoes. This is another reason to get fitted properly by someone who would know which shoes are slip resistant. Basically, this means Neoprene soles and/or the cut pattern of the soles.

What are OSHA's Requirement for Steel Toed Shoes and Training?

OSHA requires a written evaluation be conducted (This can be based on a hazard assessment, an employee survey, or accident history):

1. OSHA has no requirement for an employer to pay for steel-toed shoes unless the employer requires the employee to leave the steel shoes at work.

2. Training only has to be done once. It should consist of why steel-toed shoes are required, how to get fitted properly, and when/where they must be worn.

Should I Use a Mobile Steel-Toed Shoe Van or Store?

Mobile steel-toed shoe vans generally have a wide variety of quality shoes and a knowledgeable staff, as do stores. Make sure you are comfortable with the service provided and their return policy.

What Are Steel-Toed Shoe Standards:

OSHA incorporates by reference both:

- ANSI—American National Standards Institute, which describes proper footwear for general industry and construction.
- ASTM—American Society for Testing & Materials, which details the testing requirements for steel-toed shoes.

References:

- [OSHA 1910.136: "PPE Foot Protection"](#)
- American National Standards Institute: ANSI Z41-1999, "Personal Protection – Protective Footwear"
- American National Standards Institute: ANSI Z41-1991, "Personal Protection – Protective Footwear"
- [American Society for Testing & Materials: ASTM F-2412-2005, "Standard Test Methods for Foot Protection"](#)

If you have any questions regarding this, please see your supervisor or manager or a member of the Brewery Safety Committee.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BREWERY SAFETY, PLEASE VISIT THE MBAA BREWERY SAFETY WEBSITE AT:
<http://www.mbaa.com/brewresources/brewsafety>