

Work health and safety hazard factsheet

Footwear

This factsheet is a summary only and intended to be read in conjunction with the related documents and resources set out at the end of this factsheet.

Appropriate footwear is essential personal protective equipment (PPE) and is an important safety item, especially when working in hazardous environments. Good soles and enclosed footwear provide a sound grip on the floor and prevent accidents such as slips, trips and falls.

Hazards

Common footwear related hazards include but are not limited to:

- treads that are worn or clogged
- soles that are very smooth and do not provide grip, especially in slippery environments
- high heels with small contact areas, especially on uneven ground
- poor fittings, either too large or too small
- unenclosed shoes, including sandals, thongs and/or slides.

Injuries

The results of wearing inappropriate footwear can include acute and/or chronic injury, including but not limited to:

- cuts, abrasions and bruises
- deep lacerations and/or amputations
- burns caused by fire, hot substances and/or corrosive chemicals
- bone fractures, breaks and dislocations
- musculoskeletal damage and/or head injury caused by slips, trips and falls.

Risk management process

Risk management is the responsibility of everyone in our schools and workplaces. All employees must be aware of potential risks, report hazards, follow the [Risk Management Procedure](#) by actively engaging in identifying hazards, assessing risks, implementing control measures and monitoring potential risks that may impact them at work.

Principals and other workplace managers must engage in consultation and communication with employees, Health and Safety Representatives, Health and Safety Committees (where they exist) and other workers throughout each step of the risk management process.

1. Identify

Identify footwear-related hazards by:

- monitoring, reviewing and investigating all hazard, incident, injury and incident reports for footwear-related components
- conducting regular workplace inspections that include observations of footwear
- displaying footwear requirements in high risk and/or hazardous environments, such as hospitality kitchens, technology and applied studies (TAS) workshops and in staffrooms and site sheds. This may be through safe operating procedures.

2. Assess

Apply the WHS Risk Matrix contained in the department's WHS Risk Management Procedures to determine a risk rating. This will indicate how urgently you need to act.



Take immediate action, if safe to do so, to eliminate or reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable if the risk rating is high-extreme and/or there is a risk of imminent harm.

3. Control

The Hierarchy of Controls prioritises higher level controls (elimination and substitution) over lower-level controls (engineering, administrative and Personal Protective Equipment). The aim is to implement the most effective control measures available to minimise or eliminate risks.

Controls to prevent and/or address footwear related hazards include but are not limited to encouraging workers to wear shoes that:

Control Measure Category	Control Measure
Administrative	ensure <u>safe operating procedures</u> are displayed where applicable
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	are appropriate to the conditions, including indoor, outdoor, stairs, playgrounds and sports fields
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	are comfortable, provide adequate foot support and are in good condition
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	have a low, wide-based heel, a well-fitting heel cup and grip the heel firmly
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	are non-slip and have shock-absorbing insoles if the employee will be walking or standing on hard floors for prolonged periods.

Mandatory footwear safety requirements

Some work requires compliance with Australian/NZ Standard 2210: Safety Protective and Occupational Footwear, including but not limited to work undertaken:

- by general assistant and/or farm assistant positions
- in TAS classrooms and workshops, canteens, kitchens and science laboratories.

Teachers and other workers, including volunteers, cannot proceed to work in these areas if they are not wearing nonslip, enclosed leather footwear at all times. If not leather, the material must be confirmed by the manufacturer as suitable for the conditions.

Sandals, open footwear or high heeled shoes are not permitted in these areas and/or other work areas where there is high risk of injury.

There are additional requirements for construction workers, or others on building sites, who must wear work boots with reinforced toes, compliant with the relevant [Australian/NZ Standard 2210: Safety Protective and Occupational Footwear](#).

4. Review

Review and monitor workplace hazards and associated risk by:

- Conducting regular workplace inspections and audits to identify potential hazards and assess the effectiveness of existing control measures.
- Reviewing incident and hazard reports to ensure risk controls are effective, assist in identifying trends, patterns, and areas for improvement.
- Analysing near-miss reports to proactively address potential hazards before they result in incidents.
- Engaging in consultation with employees and relevant stakeholders to gather feedback and insights on workplace hazards and risk controls.
- Continuously reviewing and updating the WHS risk register to ensure it remains comprehensive and up to date.
- Providing ongoing training, information and instruction to employees regarding hazard identification, reporting, and risk mitigation.

Related documents and resources

[Australian/NZ Standard 2210: Safety Protective and Occupational Footwear](#)

[Safety Alerts](#)

[Hazard report form](#)

[WHS Risk Management Procedures](#)

[WHS Risk Register](#)

Need help?

Speak to your [Work Health and Safety Advisor](#) for support and advice or contact the Incident Report and Support Hotline on **1800 811 523**.