



Proper footwear selection an important part of a safe farm

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We all wear footwear, but how many of us wear the right type for different tasks?

On the farm, there are many everyday tasks that could result in injuries to feet or ankles if the proper footwear is not used. Footwear is a key aspect of injury prevention, which is why it's important to wear the right type to ensure your safety. Make sure you're using footwear that meets specific safety standards by always selecting CSA-approved footwear, which can be identified by a green triangle (usually found on the right foot).

When it comes to tasks that involve heavy lifting, safety footwear with a steel or composite toe should be worn any time there's a chance of your foot being struck by or pinched between objects. And in situations where your foot could be injured by an object falling on top of it, use safety footwear with metatarsal guards on the tongue.

For jobs that involve electrical work, select footwear that has an electrical insulator (dielectric), which will provide resistance against electric shock. To identify this type of footwear, look for an orange Greek letter omega symbol (which resembles an upside-down horseshoe).

There's no question that producers work in all kinds of different conditions. When working in wet or muddy conditions, rubber boots are an obvious choice for keeping feet dry. It's a good idea to clean any mud and debris from your boots at the end of the day in order to maintain grip and avoid tracking debris. You can also prevent slips and falls on wet, oily, snow-covered, or icy surfaces by wearing footwear with an anti-slip outsole to maintain maximum traction. Keep in mind that while overshoe attachments (like cleats or crampons) might be useful for icy conditions, they can be hazardous to wear on dry, hard surfaces.





When working on uneven surfaces, select footwear with a tall upper and laces all the way to the top of the boot, which will help to support your ankle and prevent injury from rolling it.

If you have torn or damaged footwear that you think you could get a couple of extra months out of, you might want to think again. Leaky rubber boots don't just lead to cold, wet feet; they could potentially expose you to chemicals and other hazardous substances. Rather than take any chances, replace damaged footwear as soon as possible.

Because footwear is such an important part of injury prevention on the farm, these requirements should be listed as mandatory personal protective equipment in the safe work procedures part of your safety management system. Don't forget to discuss the footwear requirements for specific jobs with workers during orientation.

Always assess the conditions and potential hazards that you'll be working in and select the right type of footwear for the job. Wearing the proper footwear will help ensure your safety, which means less risk of injury and more productive work.

This safety advice article is a part of Canadian Agricultural Safety Week. Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) is an annual campaign held the third week of March of each year. In 2019, Safe & Strong Farms: Build an AgSafe Canada, takes place March 10 to 16. CASW is presented by Farm Credit Canada. For more information visit agsafetyweek.ca

Cutline Robert Gobeil: Robert Gobeil is the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association's Ag Health and Safety Specialist.

Cutline Safetyfootwear1: Footwear is a key aspect of injury prevention, which is why it's important to wear the right type to ensure your safety.

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