Start Off on the Right Foot - Choosing the Correct Slip-Resistant Shoe

In 1997 more than 180,000 foot-related injuries occurred in the workplace according to the National Safety Council. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), three out of four footwear injuries in the workplace are the result of employee non-compliance. Choosing the right type of slip resistant shoe for your workplace environment and wearing them everyday is essential for your safety.

Transitions in height, and unexpected changes such as transitions from tile to carpet can be factors that contribute to slips and falls. Rough floor surfaces offer more slip-resistant characteristics by offering sharp peaks that contact the sole material of the shoe, but this can also contribute to the wear and tear of the shoe causing it to be replaced more often. Some jobs present more than one hazard to be protected against such as slip resistance and puncture protection. To help meet this need manufacturers are providing shoes that cover more than one aspect of the safety footwear market.

Slip-resistant shoes should have the following characteristics:

· The sole should have a raised tread pattern that extends over the whole area of the shoe. The shape of the tread creates a tunnel through which liquid is dispersed. A circle grip outsole is the best choice with the rubber hitting the flow and water dispersing rapidly every time a step is taken on a wet or oily surface.

· There should be about three millimeters between the sole of the shoe and the bottom of the tread. The tread will be reduced, over time, through wear. It is important to monitor this and replace your shoes when necessary.

· For added traction look for shoes that are designed with snipes or small cuts that divide the tread shape into three or four moveable parts. These are also great indicators of wear and will assist you in determining when to replace your shoes.

· There should be at least two millimeters of space between the tread pattern for maximum safety. If the treads are located too close together they could generate a hydroplaning effect on a wet surface. There must be enough space for liquid to be channeled through to the outer edges of the outsole.

For comfort it is a good idea to choose a shoe with extra support in the heel of the insole. As an added bonus today's shoe manufacturers produce occupational footwear that is stylish enough to be worn in everyday life.