

When workers think of personal protective equipment (PPE) it often is focused on hard hats, safety glasses, or gloves. However, leg and foot protection is equally important and should not be missed. Workers can be exposed to leg or foot injuries from tasks, activities, or areas such as:

- Falling or rolling objects
- Exposure to hot substances or electrical hazards
- Walking on slippery or wet surfaces or surfaces with sharp objects like nails
- Operating tools such as tampers or jack hammers
- Pouring, washing, or spraying chemicals or materials
- Lifting or working with heavy objects such as barrels

OSHA Standards 1926.95(a) says that *protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields and barriers, shall be provided, used, and maintained...* In addition, **OSHA Standard 1926.95(d)(2)** says that *the employer is not required to pay for non-specialty safety-toe protective footwear (including steel-toe shoes or steel-toe boots) and non-specialty prescription safety eyewear, provided that the employer permits such items to be worn off the job-site.*

- Basic steel toe or hard toe work boots should be considered when performing common construction activities such as lifting heavy objects. Steel or hard toe shoes must meet specific standards for protection.
- In addition to toe protection, using some tools such as jack hammers and tampers may require the addition of metatarsal protection. Metatarsal guards protect the bones on the top of the feet.
- Consider using foot protection designed for muddy, water soaked, or wet environments such as water proof rubber boots or boot covers and chest waders.
- Boot covers or chemical resistant rubber boots should be worn when working with wet concrete or cement and similar chemicals.
- Be sure to check that your boots are labeled “slip and oil resistant” when walking on slippery or wet surfaces.