

LOSS PREVENTION TIPS

Foot Personal Protective Equipment for Landscape & Horticultural Workers

Landscape and horticultural workers face unique challenges when it comes to footwear. Depending on the day, conditions may be wet or dry, hot or cold. Tasks performed may run from handling heavy objects to operating machines with rotating blades. In addition, workers may be exposed to pesticides. Because of these environmental variables, employers need to be conscious of the footwear worn by their employees to reduce injuries and lost time from work.

The OSHA Standard

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates worker safety as it relates to footwear via OSHA Standard 1910.136A. Essentially, the standard requires employers to ensure employees wear protective footwear when there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling, rolling or sharp objects. This does not mean the employer must provide the footwear.

Note: Other state and local laws may apply. Employers should consider consulting trade associations as well as legal counsel familiar with OSHA, state and local safety regulations.

Footwear Recommendations

- The minimum standard for safety footwear is set forth by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- The ANSI footwear standard is ANSI Z41-1991. All ANSI approved footwear has a protective toe and offers impact and compression protection

- It should be noted that the amount of protection provided differs from manufacturer, so it's important to check the labeling
- Select footwear based on a review of job tasks and identification of the potential hazards. Are chemicals, crush injuries or slip and fall accidents a threat?

Note: The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization that works to improve the efficiency of organizations, often by improving safety.

Preventative Measures

Proper footwear itself is not a total solution. Training employees to perform their job in a consistently safe manner and to properly care for footwear is equally important to preventing foot injuries. Consider taking the following steps:

- Inspect all equipment to make sure it is functioning properly and all safety guards are in place
- Instruct employees to never put their feet near rotating blades and discharge areas
- Inspect footwear on a regular basis. Is an employee wearing worn boots or wet footwear? Train employees on the importance of proper footwear care

- Advise employees of the need to safely clean footwear contaminated by chemicals or pesticides
- Create a culture of safety compliance that will have employees wearing protective footwear at all times

For More Information

You can find more information about the topic in this bulletin as well as useful information about other worker safety topics at the OSHA website, www.osha.gov.



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