

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Safety Tips: Protect Your Feet from Injury

There is an old saying that goes, “**When your feet hurt, you hurt all over.**” There are two major categories of work-related foot injuries. The first one is injuries that result from punctures, crushing, sprains, and lacerations. These types of injuries account for 10% of all reported disabling injuries. The second category includes those resulting from slips, trips and falls which account for 15% of all reported disabling injuries. Slips and falls do not always result in a foot injury but lack of attention to foot safety plays an important role in the occurrence.

The above two categories are not the only type of injuries that happen. There are other causes, such as: infected in-grown toenails, calluses, blisters, and just plain old “tired” feet. These may not be referred to as occupational injuries, but none-the-less they cause discomfort and can result in serious consequences in the workplace.

Based on the facts mentioned above, we should discuss some tips for foot care which we will discuss below:

- ✓ Your feet support a variety of work-related tasks: Climbing ladders, operating agriculture machinery or walking the fields during planting and harvest seasons.
- ✓ We folks, in many cases, neglect our feet by jumping off agriculture equipment, not wearing the proper footwear or not watching where we step.
- ✓ Results- Your ankles may end up in a strain, sprain or fracture, possibly causing you to miss work days and lost income.
- ✓ A worst case scenario is wearing loose pants or long shoelaces and your leg or foot gets caught in a PTO. You might have to have an amputation or extended case in a cast for several months.

WATCH YOUR STEP-

- ✓ Agriculture land around nurseries and other agriculture areas rarely have level land. There may be slopes, uneven grounds or loose gravel.
- ✓ This means that you need to take extra cautions in watching where you step to avoid “rolling” an ankle or twisting one.
- ✓ Also, while walking watch for nails in old pallets, barb wire or other sharp objects that could cause puncture wounds.
- ✓ When operating tractors or other agriculture make sure that the steps of the ladder are free of mud, debris, oil or other materials that could cause you to trip on the ladder.
- ✓ Stay back away from moving agriculture equipment that you might carelessly step too close to a wheel and crush a foot.
- ✓ Do not ever use your foot to unjam a clogged machine.
- ✓ You do always have the option of calling your supervisor for help.

WEAR THE RIGHT FOOTWEAR-

- Always invest and wear footwear that has adequate padding. That will furnish good arch support and will reduce the stress on your foot and toes and balls of your feet, especially when you do a lot of walking on concrete floors.
- Do not wear sandals or any footwear that exposes a part of your feet while you are working on your job. Fully enclosed footwear reduces your potential for cuts and exposure to chemicals and pesticides.
- Make sure that your footwear is the right size to avoid in-grown toenails. A ½ size large is better than wearing a ½ size too small.
- If you are climbing ladders for picking fruit or pruning limbs. Wear rubber-soled footwear, as they provide more grip on the ladder rungs than other materials. Leather soles may cause you to slip.
- The right types of footwear can possibly help you in other ways. For example, you might fall with bad fitting boots or shoes and injury your back, legs or feet.

OTHER PROTECTIVE FEET SAFETY TIPS-

- As mentioned above, never jump from equipment, motor vehicles or other equipment because an awkward landing may result in a twisted ankle or broken foot or ankle.
- Make sure that you have a good, solid grip on any load you are carrying to prevent a dropped load on your foot or ankle.
- Keep your feet and legs away from augers, PTO shafts or other moving parts.
- Wear clean wool or cotton socks everyday which will help reduce the risk of athlete’s feet or dermatitis.

Avoid Foot Injuries with Dos and Don’ts-

DO-

- *Watch where you are walking; take extra caution on strange ground and uneven areas.*
- *Make sure that the ladders on farm equipment are free of mud and other distracting debris.*
- *Always wear good fitting footwear with adequate padding.*

Don’t-

- *Wear sandals or other footwear that expose your feet.*
- *Stand in the path of a vehicle or agriculture equipment that could run over your feet or toes and cause serious injury.*
- *Jump from tractors or other farm equipment that could cause you to fall awkwardly.*

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