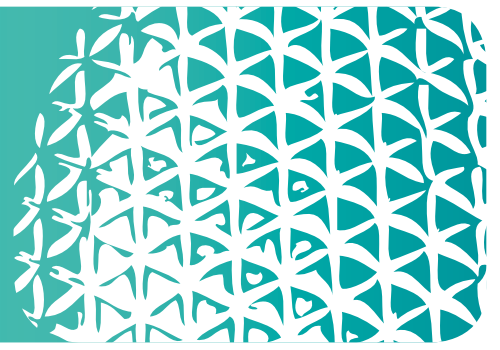


“Watch Your Step” Choosing Slip-resistant Footwear **Information Sheet**

December 2017



Every working day in Ireland six people are hurt in work-related **Slips, Trips and Falls (STF)**. STF are the second greatest single cause of workplace injuries. Slips account for almost half of all STF. In almost 6,000 workplace visits, HSA Inspectors found that 70% needed slip-resistant footwear. This information sheet will help you choose the most suitable slip-resistant footwear.

Every effort should be made to eliminate the risk from slippery pedestrian surfaces in workplaces. Slip-resistant footwear is vital in preventing accidents where a slippery surface cannot be “fixed” or kept dry. Yet proper footwear is often not considered, even after a slip accident. Footwear was only mentioned in 2% of STF accidents reported to the Authority.

1. Identify and remove risks

[General Application Regulations](#) state an employer shall provide at the employer’s cost Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for employees where risks cannot be avoided or limited.

[The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005](#) (2005 Act) requires employers to have a written [risk assessment](#).

The risk assessment should:

- identify all [slippery](#) surfaces that may be wet or contaminated (including [stairs and steps](#), [vehicle](#), walkways, [entrances, exits](#) and third-party premises),



Figure 1.
Slip-resistant footwear sign

- ensure structural changes to remove slippery areas,
- ensure operational controls where structural changes do not remove the risk, and
- identify slippery areas where a risk still remains and slip-resistant footwear is required.

2. Consult staff

Consult staff throughout the process of choosing slip-resistant footwear where possible.

When consulting workers remember:

- wherever possible test footwear in the workplace where it is to be used,
- ask wearers if footwear feels slippery underfoot,
- involve users in choosing footwear to increase its acceptability, and
- choose footwear that is comfortable, fits well and staff have agreed to and will wear.

Figure 2.
Typical slip-resistant footwear for liquids



3. Check the sole

Not all “safety” footwear is slip-resistant. Slip-resistance comes from the sole (and heel) of the shoe. A smooth sole may offer little slip resistance – like a smooth tyre on a car.

When checking slip resistance for:

- **Fluids** - footwear typically should have a close-packed well-defined tread pattern in softer material with deep cleats on a flexible flat sole
- **Loose solids** - footwear typically should have a more open well-defined tread pattern with wider channels, deep cleats and a flexible sole
- **Ice** - footwear typically should have spikes or studs that will “bite” into the ice (but may be slippery on other hard surfaces)

Liquid



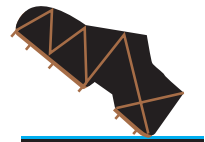
- Typically
- Close-packed tread pattern
 - Flexible sole, softer material

Loose Solids



- Typically
- More open tread pattern
 - Wider channels

Ice



- Typically
- Spikes or studs that “bite” into ice

Figure 3. Typical sole properties of slip-resistant footwear by contaminant

Ensure overshoes, if used, provide the required slip resistance.

4. Check slip-resistance information

Check any information on slip-resistance for the footwear. Check if footwear indicates that it has been tested to a standard for slip-resistance.

On fluid contamination, for example:

- footwear tested to EN ISO 20344:2004 (A1: 2007) may be marked:
 - “SRA” (tested on ceramic tile with diluted soap),
 - “SRB” (tested on smooth steel with glycerol), or
 - “SRC” (tested under both conditions).
- footwear tested to the UK [GRIP rating scheme](#) may be marked one to five stars (3 star, 4 star or 5 star footwear is recommended where there’s a slip risk).

If required consider having footwear specifically tested on the actual working surface with the expected contaminant.



Figure 4.
Label attached to footwear indicating slip resistance test results

5. Check other safety requirements

The 2005 Act requires designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers to provide information on use, maintenance and cleaning of footwear.

Check that footwear:

- is reasonably easy to clean, maintain,
- should last a reasonable time (Durability can be tested, for example, using the [SATRA Pedatron Test](#)),
- has an ankle strap if needed,
- is **CE** marked, and
- meets requirements for penetration resistance, toe protection, electrical properties, water resistance, oil resistance, heat resistance, ankle protection.

6. Provide for training, maintenance and storage

Section 10 of the 2005 Act says employers must [provide information, instruction and training](#) and ensure PPE is properly maintained and replaced as necessary.

Employers must:

- provide training and communicate requirements to wearers, and
- specify measures and provide facilities to store, clean, maintain, assess and replace slip-resistant footwear.



Figure 5.
Clogged channels in slip-resistant footwear

Further information

Further information is available in the following publications.

All are available for free download from the Health and Safety Authority at www.hsa.ie/slips.

1. “Safer Work Stairs and Steps Information Sheet”
2. “Preventing Vehicles Slips, Trips and Falls Information Sheet”
3. “Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls at Work Information Sheet”

Use www.besmart.ie – the HSA’s free online risk assessment tool

Visit our online portal for health and safety courses at <https://hsalearning.ie>

Contact the Health and Safety Authority at wcu@hsa.ie or LoCall 1890 289 389