FSIS Employee Training

Foot Protection – Slip Resistant Footwear

INSTRUCTIONS

This document provides training on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for foot protection as required by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation 29 CFR 1910.132, PPE General Requirements and 29 CFR 1910.136, Foot Protection. After reading, and prior to performing work that requires this type of PPE, your supervisor may ask you to demonstrate your understanding of the information in this handout, such as your ability to properly use the PPE. You must also follow any specific manufacturer instructions on the use and care of the PPE.

PPE SELECTION

- An analysis of FSIS Injury Data from 2014-2016, showed that approximately 40% of all FSIS injuries at establishments are from slips, trips, and falls. This is due to the extremely slippery walking and working surfaces caused by water, blood, tissue, and cleaning products. Therefore, FSIS employees are required to wear slip resistant footwear.
- Slip resistant footwear helps to reduce the likelihood of slips and falls. Slip resistant footwear looks and feels like other footwear, but is designed to increase traction through special sole materials and treads. The special tread designs effectively channel liquids up and away from the bottom of the sole.

Slip resistant rubber boots

- FSIS does not offer slip resistant footwear through the FSIS supply catalog. Instead, employees are reimbursed for the purchase of slip resistant footwear used in the work place in accordance with FSIS Directive 3410.3.
- When purchasing footwear, make sure that it is marked with the term “Slip Resistant”.
- There are no mandatory sole designs or friction requirements that must be met to classify a sole as “slip resistant,” only general guidelines. Some manufacturers will label their footwear as meeting the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) slip-resistance standard (ASTM F 1677).
- In addition, per FSIS Directive 3410.3, footwear must have water-resistant uppers, and a closed heel and toe. Soles may not be made from leather, wood, hard plastic or metal materials.

WHERE/WHEN

Slip resistant footwear must be worn in all areas of the establishment where there is a slip hazard, except the USDA office and break rooms.

PROPER USE

- Slip resistant footwear will not be effective unless the soles are routinely cleaned and properly maintained. Soles can lose traction if too much fluid or material is present in the treads or if the treads become worn or damaged.
- Slip resistant footwear must also fit properly to avoid creating an additional tripping hazard, fatigue, or blisters due to footwear being too small or large. Proper fit includes:
    - Ensuring footwear fits comfortably. Shoe sizes among manufacturers vary enough that footwear should be tried on rather than chosen only by size.

PROPER USE (CONTINUED)

- Laces can be securely fastened and are not long enough to cause a trip hazard.

- Even when wearing slip resistant footwear, employees should remember to follow good safety procedures:
  - Look for slip hazards in your path of travel. If there is a hazard, take an alternate route if possible.
  - When potential slip hazards are present, take shorter, slower steps, keeping the feet shoulder-width apart.
  - Hold onto hand rails when on stairs or ramps.

LIMITATIONS

- Keep in mind: slip resistant footwear is not slip proof – instead, it helps to reduce the hazard of slipping. Employees should still take proper care when walking around the work place in wet and greasy environments.

The sole of a slip-resistant boot

- Slip resistant footwear eventually will lose its effectiveness due to normal wear and the environment. If the tread on the sole is 50% worn, the footwear should be replaced. A good indicator of tread wear is the loss of traction.
- Slip resistant footwear is designed to be most effective on liquids and grease. Wearing the footwear in snow should be avoided, as snow can pack into the sole treads.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- Inspect slip resistant footwear for wear and tear prior to each use. This includes looking for cracks or holes, separation of footwear material, broken buckles or laces, embedded items, and worn treads. Shoes that are damaged should be replaced.
- Clean the sole of the shoe whenever debris builds up.

QUESTIONS?

For more information on this topic, please contact your Occupational Safety and Health Specialist. Contact information can be found on the FSIS Safety site at www.tinyurl.com/FSIS-ESHG.