

Protect Your Feet From Injuries

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are available in Spanish at gemplers.com.

Key Points:

- Carelessness on the job can lead to sprains, strains, torn ligaments, and even amputation of the feet or legs.
- You can avoid most foot and ankle injuries by watching where you walk and climb, and by wearing proper footwear.

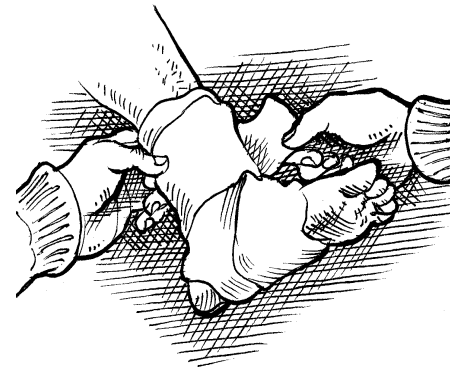
Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Foot care is important

- Your feet are used to perform a variety of work-related tasks, such as climbing ladders, operating certain agricultural machinery, or walking the fields during planting and harvest.
- Yet some people neglect their feet by being careless on the job. For example, they jump off of tractors or other moving equipment, don't wear the proper footwear, or don't watch where they walk.
- As a result, feet or ankles may wind up with sprains, fractures, and other serious injuries that can keep a person off the job and result in lost income for days or even weeks or months.
- Amputation may occur if a loose pants leg or shoelace gets caught in a power takeoff unit (PTO), or if your feet are crushed by farm machinery.
- Knowing how to avoid injuring your feet will help prevent serious incidents that can linger with you the rest of your life.

Watch your step

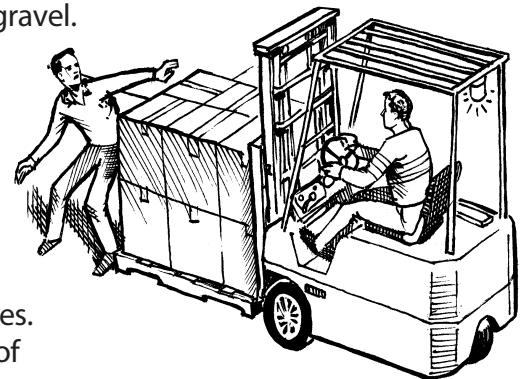
- The ground at nurseries, farms and other agricultural operations is rarely level and may have numerous slopes, uneven ground, and loose gravel.
- That means you need to always watch where you are walking to avoid twisting and spraining your ankles or feet.
- When walking, make sure there are no nails from pallets, barbed wire or other sharp objects in your path that could cause puncture wounds. Also, watch out for sharp rocks.
- When operating tractors and other machinery, be sure all steps are free of mud, oil, ice, and other debris that may cause you to slide off, land awkwardly on your feet, and lead to serious injuries.
- Be aware of all moving equipment in the workplace and stay out of the way to avoid getting your feet crushed by a forklift, wagon, shifting stacks, or other equipment.
- Also, never use your foot to unjam a clogged machine. Instead, notify your supervisor of the problem.



Report any type of foot injury to your supervisor. Some injuries may need medical attention.



Serious foot injuries can occur if a loose pants leg gets caught in a PTO.



Stay out of the way of forklifts and other moving equipment.

(Continued on back)

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Wear the right footwear

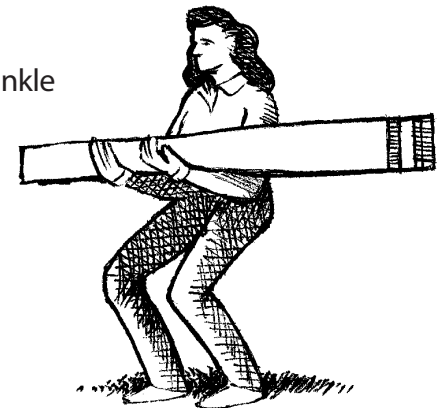
- Always wear comfortable footwear with proper padding that will provide good arch support and reduce stress on your toes and balls of your feet, especially if you are working on a concrete floor.
- Do not wear sandals or other footwear that exposes any part of the foot while you are on the job. Wearing shoes or boots that cover the entire foot reduces the risk of cuts, as well as exposure to soil or chemicals.
- Make sure your shoes are the right size, to avoid ingrown toenails. One-half size too large is better than one-half size too small.
- If you climb a ladder to pick fruit or perform other tasks, always wear rubber-soled shoes that will provide a good grip on the rungs. Do not wear leather-soled shoes that may cause you to slip.
- Know that some jobs may require safety toe shoes or boots.
- Keep in mind that wearing the right footwear can also prevent other injuries besides those to the feet. For example, if you fall because you are wearing poor fitting shoes, you may also injure your back, shoulders and other parts of the body.



If you climb a ladder, wear rubber-soled shoes that give you a good grip on the rungs.

More important points

- Never jump from agricultural machinery, motor vehicles or other equipment, because an awkward landing may result in a twisted or broken ankle or foot. Slowly climb up and down equipment. When possible, add steps to vehicles when the first step is too high off the ground.
- Make sure you have a good grip on any heavy objects you lift or carry, so you don't drop them on your toes or feet. Wearing steel-toed shoes is recommended if you do a lot of heavy lifting.
- Don't let your feet or legs get too close to PTOs, augers or other moving parts.
- Make sure you wear clean socks made of breathable cotton or wool every day. This will help reduce your risk of athlete's foot and dermatitis.
- If you suffer any type of foot injury, report it to your supervisor.



Get a good grip on heavy objects you carry.

Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the Avoiding Foot Injuries Do's and Don'ts.

AVOIDING FOOT INJURIES DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Always watch where you are walking, especially if you are working in areas where there's uneven ground or sharp objects such as rocks, nails or barbed wire.
- Make sure the steps used to climb up and down from farm machinery are free of mud, oil, and other slippery substances that could cause you to fall and injure your feet.
- Always wear footwear with adequate padding.

DON'T:

- Wear sandals or other shoes that expose any part of your feet.
- Stand in the path of vehicles or other moving equipment that could run over your feet or toes and cause serious injury.
- Jump from tractors or other equipment. That could lead to an awkward landing.

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