Cute Shoe Syndrome

Summer’s here and the weather’s fine. Unfortunately, with all the beautiful weather, there also comes that scourge of summer employment, *Cute Shoe Syndrome*. With the warm weather, comes the temptation for your employees to slip their feet into something a little cuter, lighter and just plain more fun to wear. Unfortunately, a cuter, lighter and more fun shoe does not translate into a safer shoe.

DOSH regulations require employers to ensure their employees wear the appropriate personal protective equipment necessary to work safely. It is well known that in most construction fields, workers must either have or be provided, steel toed boots, hard hats, eye protection. In the long-term care industry, personal protective equipment includes non-slip footwear where the worker is exposed to tiled or other smooth surface floors. *See CRM Risk Management Manual 7-2*. Over the years, we have had a number of slip and falls, primarily in dietary, where the employee was wearing slick-soled flats or open-toed sandals. All it takes is a slightly wet floor, and a moment of inattention, and a serious accident can take place. We urge you to check your footwear policy and its implementation.

If you don’t already do this, consider selecting one or two shoe models with appropriate high friction soles that you can direct your staff to purchase. Maintaining uniformity in shoe wear makes it easier for management to inspect and enforce compliance with your foot wear policy.

Slick-soled or open-toed shoes are not the only footwear hazards to which staff might be exposed. For example, you may need to consider a mandatory work boot requirement for your maintenance or grounds keeping staff, particularly where there is crushing-injury exposure from tool use. Steel-toed work boots might not be on everyone’s summer fashion list but for a maintenance employee who has just preserved her toes, from a serious crush injury, those work boots may be very attractive indeed.