



[How To Prevent Slips And Trips In The Workplace](#)

By Stuart Thorne, Managing Director of premium safety footwear brand U-Power

Slips and trips are the leading cause of major injuries in the British workplace, comprising almost one in three of injuries reported under RIDDOR, and forming a significant part of the workplace-injury cost to the country of £5.3billion a year.¹ [\(Read More\)](#)

In addition, there is the human cost in terms of suffering, pain and loss of work. Employees must be aware of the possibility of slips and trips, even on level surfaces, and wear suitable safety footwear to reduce the risk of injury. Supplying the correct footwear can go a long way to help avoid this.

Assessing the environment

However, workers should never be totally reliant on their footwear to prevent slips. They need to be sure-footed and aware of their own surroundings. Although a wide variety of types of safety footwear is available, every situation should be judged individually.

The first step is to assess the working environment – is it a flat surface, are there liquids or oils likely to be present on the floor, is it wet outside, is there concrete, cement, earth or other debris present? In many cases, the floor surface changes from one area to another – wet to dry, or dirty to clean, for example.

The best possible product to cover all aspects is needed. Footwear should not be judged on its slip-resistance test results alone. Just because footwear has passed all the statutory tests in laboratory conditions, this does not necessarily translate to its use on a muddy, wet or dirty warehouse or factory floor.

In addition, the wearer shouldn't be thinking that their footwear is uncomfortable, as this is distracting. If they are comfortable and aware of the shoe's support, this gives a better foothold while working.

The outsole

Next, the kind of sole should be looked at. Whichever of the many available types is chosen, the most important aspect is that it must be slip-resistant on all types of flooring.

It must be classified and marked with the European code 'SRC', ie tested on wet ceramic tiles and on steel with glycerol, as this will provide good grip across all terrain.

Footwear with slip resistance just above the required SRC standard will have a deep, large, tread and leading-edge pattern to provide grip in muddy, earthy conditions, plus a pleated sole enabling the wearer to maintain their foothold. The depth and width of the cleat must suit the relevant environment.

The composition of the sole material is important. While rubber soles are very effective in heat and slippery conditions, polyurethane (PU) is one of the best sole materials because of the cleats that can be formed from it.

Educating the wearer

Ensuring a safe work environment is provided and taking a proactive approach to safety helps keep workers safe, but they must also take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. As part of this, they should check and maintain their footwear assiduously. Like a car tyre, slip

resistance will decrease during the life of the shoe or boot, so it shouldn't be allowed to get to the end of its life before being replaced.

Everybody wears their shoes out differently and at contrasting times, and everyone has diverse walking habits and idiosyncrasies.

Wearers should be encouraged to think about the policies and procedures in their own workplace and whether they are robust enough to be able to prevent slips and trips.

It's a good idea for both employers and employees to take a tour of a virtual workplace, identifying common workplace slip and trip hazards and fixing them as they go with practical solutions.

Manufacturer support

Back-up from the manufacturer is crucial in selecting the right footwear. Reputable manufacturers will always be willing to give expert, professional advice and share their knowledge, and footwear procurers and wearers should never hesitate to ask them to give advice or come out and look at the working conditions in situ, offering a site survey or wearer trials in the relevant environment.

Where there is a risk of slippage, best practice is always to consult the experts. A dependable manufacturer will have all the solutions.

For more information visit:

<https://www.u-power.it/en/>