



Staff Safety Focus

Putting the Right Footwear Forward

Flip flops are an extremely popular style of footwear for many staff members. However, not only can they be considered an unprofessional form of workplace footwear; they also carry a more serious risk. This style of shoe is associated with a number of problems, injuries and accidents.

Physicians at the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons say flip-flops are linked to a growing number of heel problems among teens and young adults. Flip-flops with thin soles have no arch support and can accentuate any abnormal biomechanics in foot motion which eventually brings pain and inflammation. Unlike sturdy shoes, flip-flops aren't good for extensive walking because they offer no arch support, heel cushioning, or shock absorption. Wearers can suffer foot pain due to lack of arch support, tendinitis, and even sprained ankles if they trip. Because they offer little protection, wearers are at greater risk for stubbed toes, glass cuts, puncture wounds, or having a heavy object dropped on the foot. Flip-flops can also impair a driver's control if they come off the foot and lodge under the brake or gas pedal, according to the American Automobile Association.

Organizations should consider when and where this and other styles of footwear are appropriate. Flip flops are most likely only appropriate in wet areas and when not worn for extended periods of time. Appropriate footwear can help staff to be more comfortable, perform their responsibilities more effectively and of course protect them from injury. Sturdy shoes should be required for most positions and safety shoes or boots are appropriate for some specialized job functions.

By monitoring the attire and footwear of employees and volunteers, organizations can help control accidents, slips and falls and other injuries.

Other topical safety resources are available from Safe-Wise Consulting.