

# HSE'S GRIP SCHEME

## Make the best choice when buying slip-resistant footwear

Slips, trips and falls on level surfaces were responsible for a third of non-fatal injuries in UK workplaces as reported under RIDDOR in 2017/18.

**Workplace slips are preventable.**



At HSE we understand the science behind slips. By identifying the underlying causes of slips, trips and falls in our workplaces, we can help you prevent future incidents.

Our footwear rating scheme, GRIP, provides you with free information about the slip performance of footwear to help inform your purchasing decision.

As a footwear buyer, you can use our research to enable you to choose the most appropriate slip resistant shoes for your employees, thus reducing slip accidents and the associated business costs.

### **Isn't there already a European Standard for footwear slip resistance?**

Yes; the vast majority of occupational footwear is sold with evidence of slip resistance from the European standard test. The 'highest' classification from this standard is 'SRC'.

However, the European standard can be viewed as a minimum level of slip resistance required to bring footwear to the market.

If, as the purchaser, you are concerned about slips and would like the footwear to be a control measure, it is inadvisable to select footwear on the basis of the standard classifications.

GRIP is a more rigorous test of slip resistance, which shows the comparative performance of otherwise indistinguishable footwear. It can be used to inform a risk based approach to managing slips.

### **How does the GRIP scheme help to prevent workplace slips?**

The GRIP scheme was launched by HSL in June 2014 to provide footwear manufacturers the opportunity to help their customers select footwear based on their slip resistance requirements. Manufacturer participation in the GRIP scheme is voluntary.

Footwear submitted for GRIP rating is tested on a standardised slippery wet ceramic tile.

The conditions are deliberately challenging in order to find out what happens when you really push footwear to the limits of slip resistance.

The test is done using water - which is the cause of most slips - and glycerol, a thicker contaminant which simulates oil. Footwear is classified by the amount of grip generated.

Rated footwear achieves a star rating between one (lowest) and five (highest).

The 1 to 3 star ratings require an increasing level of grip on the wet tile.

4 and 5 star footwear also has to achieve a specified level of grip with glycerol.

### **How the GRIP scheme helps with your risk assessment**

Footwear buyers have a duty to assess their workplace slip risk and decide what level of slip resistance is appropriate for them.

The factors that contribute to slip risk will vary from one organisation, job role and work environment to the next.

The risk assessment should also consider any accidents that have occurred and whether any reasonable controls would reduce the likelihood of further accidents.

Where footwear is identified as a control measure, the GRIP scheme helps you to make an informed purchasing decision. It enables you to buy footwear that has the most appropriate slip-resistance rating for your particular working environment.

### **Where can I find current footwear GRIP ratings?**

Information on GRIP-rated footwear and participating manufacturers is available at:

<https://www.hsl.gov.uk/publications-and-products/grip/grip-ratings>

### **Remember: workplace slips are preventable**

Many footwear buyers have embraced the GRIP scheme. They see the value of slip resistant footwear and are setting minimum specifications for their footwear.

The GRIP scheme is the only means by which footwear slip resistance performance can be reliably assessed, so these buyers will now only consider GRIP rated footwear.

Given that the vast majority of workers wear footwear whilst at work, and slips are the most common accident at work, there is huge potential to make a positive impact on the safety of workers through informed selection of footwear.

### **Are you a footwear manufacturer?**

The interest that the GRIP scheme has generated among end users is encouraging more footwear manufacturers to participate in the scheme.

Participating manufacturers can clearly indicate the level of slip-resistance their footwear has attained at point-of-sale, gaining competitive advantage over non-rated footwear.

**If you'd like to participate in the GRIP scheme, you can obtain the Scheme Handbook and get more information at <https://www.hsl.gov.uk/hsl-shop/grip/grip-full-rating>**