SHARP START

DECEMBER 16 — Compromised Protection

Hole in steel toe	Get new boots

A steel-toe boot had a hole worn straight through — metal exposed like a skeleton beneath tired leather. Fatigue made it easy to overlook; complacency insisted, “It’ll be fine. It’s held up this long.” But boots are your last line of defense, and when PPE gives out, it doesn’t give warnings.

A boot that’s torn and worn straight through,
Won’t block what heavy loads can do.
Check your gear before each day
Protection fails when it’s worn away.

Wearing a damaged boot is like driving with a frayed seatbelt. It works right up until you *really* need it — and then it’s too late.

Hazards

- Crush injuries
- Sparks landing inside the boot
- Electrical conduction through exposed metal
- Slips/trips
- PPE compliance issues

Stats

- 53,000 foot injuries occur a year, and 60% tied to worn or damaged footwear.
- Injury severity increases **5×** when PPE fails

Words of Wisdom

- PPE must be in good condition to be compliant, but that’s your last line of defense. Protect yourself.
- If your glove, sock, hardhat or boot has a skylight, it’s time for its retirement.

Pause and Think

When workers get used to small cracks in their hard hat, holes in their gloves, or boots that are split at the toe, the brain stops treating those defects as hazards. Over time, we start believing the gear will “probably be fine”, simply because nothing bad has happened yet. That false sense of security is dangerous! Worn PPE fails faster, protects less, and can turn a minor incident into a major injury.

- What PPE do YOU forget to inspect most often?
- How long do you usually keep your boots before replacement?
- What’s a time worn-out PPE almost caused an incident?