



**Boots / Chemical Spills /
Emergency Preparedness / Driving Safety /
Stress Management / Fall Protection**

"Boots:

The Unsung Heroes of

Work boots aren't just footwear—they're critical personal protective equipment (PPE) that serve as your first line of defense in hazardous environments. Whether you're stationed at a warehouse, navigating excavation zones, or working across construction, enforcement, or highway operations in Riverside County, boots protect you from injuries, slips, punctures, electrical hazards, and environmental exposure.

In fields where safety is non-negotiable, boots are the **unsung heroes**—working quietly to shield feet from impact and moisture while meeting essential Cal/OSHA PPE requirements. Yet even the most rugged pair can become a hidden liability if neglected. That's why routine maintenance isn't optional—it's essential for sustained protection, long-term comfort, and policy compliance.

This article explores the importance of proactive boot upkeep and provides a practical, step-by-step guide to ensure your PPE remains safe, durable, and field



Step 1: Clean Regularly

Surface Dirt Removal

- Use a soft-bristle brush to sweep away loose dirt, dust, and debris.
- For dry mud or caked-on materials, tap soles together gently before brushing.

Spot Cleaning

- Dip a cloth in warm soapy water (mild soap or saddle soap preferred).
- Wipe down leather, rubber, or synthetic panels, taking care around seams and stitching.
- Use a toothbrush for hard-to-reach areas, especially around eyelets and soles.

Deep Cleaning

- For heavy buildup (cement, paint, chemicals), rinse soles with a low-pressure hose and scrub with a boot-specific cleaning solution if available.
- Avoid soaking the entire boot unless it's waterproof; excessive water may warp leather.

Step 2: Dry Properly

Air-Drying Essentials

- Place boots in a well-ventilated space with indirect sunlight.
- Tilt boots sideways to drain trapped moisture.

Moisture Absorption

- Stuff each boot with newspaper, paper towels, or moisture-wicking packs.
- Replace inserts and insoles until completely dry.

Avoid This

- Do NOT use hair dryers or direct heat: this causes cracking and shrinkage of adhesives.
- Do NOT store wet boots in plastic containers or vehicles to prevent mold and bacteria.

Step 3: Condition & Protect

Leather Maintenance

- Once fully dry, apply a leather conditioner (cream or spray) with a microfiber cloth.

f Workplace Safety"



properly

- Rub in circular motions and allow time for absorption.

Waterproofing

a well-ventilated
sunlight.

- Use a spray-on or wax-based waterproofing product suited to boot material.
- Apply evenly to all external surfaces, including stitching.

s or upside down
moisture.

- Re-apply protection monthly or when signs of water penetration appear.

with newspaper,
boot absorbent

Toe Protection

every few hours
y.

Environmental Notes

- Boots exposed to high heat, dust, or chemical environments may need more frequent conditioning and protection.
- For non-leather boots, use manufacturer-recommended sprays or coatings.

- Press the toe area gently. Any signs of softness or warping in steel/composite caps may mean compromised protection.
- Visually inspect for dents, corrosion, or exposed materials.

dryers, radiators,
s causes cracking
in leather or

Laces & Stitching

t boots in sealed
cles—this invites

Step 4: Inspect for Safety

Sole & Tread

- Check for worn tread, cracks, or delamination.
- Use a coin or ruler to measure depth—shallower than 2mm may require replacement.

- Confirm laces are intact, without fraying.
- Check eyelets and hooks—loose or broken hardware can affect fit and safety.
- Inspect stitching for separation or loose threads, especially around the heel and tongue.

condition &

Overall Fit & Integrity

apply a leather
(cream, oil, or lotion)
cloth.

- Ask: “Do these boots still feel secure, supportive, and snug?”
- If ankles roll or feet slip within the boot, it may be time to retire them.

Chemical Spills

If you work in an office environment and think “a chemical spill won’t happen here,” think again! Chemical spills can include the delivery or unsafe use of custodial supplies, printing or copying supplies, and traffic accidents involving hazardous materials on streets or freeways adjacent to your building.

The best way to deal with chemical spills is to have a written Emergency Action Plan established and communicated to all personnel. This plan should include procedures for ventilation failure, evacuation, medical care, reporting, and drills.


Safety Data Sheets (SDS):

SDS’s are pivotal to properly reacting to accidental releases of a hazardous chemical. Maintain a Hazard Communication Program and ensure you have the location of your SDS sheets posted on your Safety Bulletin Board.

To avoid a spill in the workplace, read Section 7 Handling and Storage to prevent the material from accidental release. If there is a spill, Section 6 Accidental Release Measures shall be strictly followed.


Familiarize yourself with the hazardous pictograms for identification and to adjust Personal Protective Equipment as needed.

Flame Over Circle




- Oxidizers

Environment Non Mandatory




- Aquatic Toxicity

Skull and Crossbones




- Acute Toxicity (fatal or toxic)

Health Hazard




- Carcinogen
- Mutagenicity
- Reproductive Toxicity
- Respiratory Sensitizer
- Target Organ Toxicity
- Aspiration Toxicity

Gas Cylinder




- Gases Under Pressure

Flame



- Flammables
- Pyrophorics
- Self-Heating
- Emits Flammable Gas
- Self-Reactives
- Organic Peroxides

Exclamation Mark




- Irritant (skin and eye)
- Skin Sensitizer
- Acute Toxicity (harmful)
- Narcotic Effects
- Respiratory Tract Irritant
- Hazardous to Ozone Layer (Non-Mandatory)

Corrosion



- Skin Corrosion/Burns
- Eye Damage
- Corrosive to Metals

Exploding Bomb



- Explosives
- Self-Reactives
- Organic Peroxides

Reaction to a Chemical Spill:

- ◆ **Remove** all patients/clients, staff, and visitors from the affected area to a safe location. Stop the source of the hazardous material, if possible. Alert Facilities/911, if needed.
- ◆ **Confine** the spill by closing all doors to the affected area.
- ◆ **Account** for all employees/visitors after removal from the area.
- ◆ **Secure** the area to prevent persons from walking through the area. Redirect foot traffic away from the spill.

If the spill happened outdoors, dial 911, notify Facility/building owner, alert your department manager, and protect floor drains or other means for environmental release if possible. Spill socks and absorbents may be placed around drains. Standby and remain alert for changing conditions that may require evacuation.

Clean up and decontamination procedures should only be conducted by Facility trained persons. Use all appropriate personal protective equipment like gloves, goggles, full body suits, aprons, face shields, foot protection, etc.

In the event of a large spill, evacuate, call the Fire Department, and notify the County Safety Loss Control Division as soon as possible.

First Aid:



If the spill injures a person, transfer them to a safe area, locate the SDS sheet, read instructions for emergency procedures (Section 4 First Aid Measures), and administer first aid. Send a copy of the SDS sheet to the doctor with the injured employee.

THE POWER OF

The Importance of Emergency Action Planning

Emergencies can strike without warning, whether it's a natural disaster, workplace accident, or unexpected crisis. Having a well-prepared Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is critical to ensuring the safety of employees, protecting assets, and maintaining business continuity. An effective EAP minimizes risks, reduces confusion, and enables swift, coordinated action during high-stress situations.

Why Emergency Action Planning Matters

An EAP is more than a document—it's a proactive strategy to save lives and mitigate damage. Here's why it's essential:

- **Protects Lives:** A clear plan ensures employees know how to evacuate, seek shelter, or respond to specific threats, reducing the risk of injury or worse.
- **Reduces Downtime:** By outlining recovery steps, an EAP helps businesses resume operations quickly, minimizing financial losses.
- **Ensures Compliance:** Many industries are required by law (e.g., OSHA regulations in the U.S.) to have emergency plans, avoiding penalties and ensuring accountability.
- **Builds Confidence:** Employees and stakeholders feel safer knowing there's a structured response to potential crises.

The Process for Creating an Emergency Action Plan

Developing an EAP requires careful planning and collaboration. Below are the key steps to create an effective plan:

1. **Conduct a Risk Assessment** Identify potential hazards specific to your workplace, such as fires, chemical spills, earthquakes, or active shooter scenarios. Evaluate the likelihood and impact of each risk to prioritize planning efforts.
2. **Define Roles and Responsibilities** Assign clear roles to employees, such as evacuation coordinators, first aid responders, or communication leads. Ensure everyone understands their duties and is trained accordingly.
3. **Develop Response Procedures** Create step-by-step protocols for different emergencies. For example:
 - **Evacuation:** Map out primary and secondary exit routes, designate assembly points, and account for individuals with disabilities.
 - **Shelter-in-Place:** Identify safe areas for events like tornadoes or chemical releases.

PREPAREDNESS

- **Communication:** Establish a chain of command and methods for notifying employees, emergency services, and stakeholders.
4. **Provide Training and Resources** Conduct regular training sessions, including drills for evacuation, fire response, or lockdown procedures. Equip the workplace with necessary tools, such as first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and emergency contact lists.
 5. **Test and Update the Plan** Run simulations to test the EAP's effectiveness. Gather feedback from participants to identify gaps or weaknesses. Review and update the plan annually or after significant workplace changes, such as new equipment or facility expansions.
 6. **Communicate the Plan** Ensure all employees have access to the EAP, whether through handbooks, posters, or digital platforms. Reinforce awareness through regular safety meetings and onboarding for new hires.



Key Tips for Success

- **Involve Everyone:** Engage employees at all levels to foster ownership and ensure the plan reflects real-world needs.
- **Keep It Simple:** Use clear, concise instructions that are easy to follow under pressure.
- **Stay Current:** Update the EAP to reflect new regulations, technologies, or lessons learned from past incidents.

Conclusion

An Emergency Action Plan is a cornerstone of workplace safety. By preparing for the unexpected, organizations protect their people, operations, and reputation. Start today—assess risks, build your plan, train your team, and reach out to your Safety Loss Control Coordinator if guidance is needed to ensure readiness when it matters most.

DRIVING

Forgotten but Critical: 20+ Road Rules & Courtesies Drivers Often Overlook



Facts and Stats

Only 65% of drivers recognize a school crossing sign.

That means over 83 million U.S. drivers might miss this critical safety cue.

Stop signs weren't always red.

They were originally black on yellow until fade-resistant red paint was developed in the 1950s.

Legal Must-Knows

Come to a Complete Stop at Stop Signs

Rolling through is a ticket waiting to happen. A full stop means wheels cease motion completely.

Stop Before Turning Right on Red

You must yield first—even if it seems clear. Pedestrians and cross traffic have priority.

Signal Lane Changes

Merging silently is confusing and dangerous. Use your blinker at least 100 feet beforehand.

Don't Block Intersections

Avoid entering if your exit path isn't clear. Blocking cross-traffic causes gridlock.

Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalks

Even if there's no light, if someone's crossing, they have the right-of-way.

Headlights On When Wipers Are On

Rain, fog, or snow? California law requires your headlights for visibility.

Respect School Zone Speeds Slow down near schools—even if kids aren't immediately visible.

Don't Use the Shoulder to Pass

Shoulders are for emergencies, not shortcuts. It's illegal and dangerous.

Follow the Move Over Law When emergency vehicles are on the shoulder, change lanes or slow significantly.

Use Turnouts on One-Lane Roads If you're holding up 5+ vehicles, pull over where marked to let them pass.

Yield in Roundabouts Incoming drivers must yield to traffic already circulating.

No U-Turns in Business Districts (Unless Posted) Avoid flipping around on busy streets unless explicitly allowed.

Stay Out of Blind Spots—Especially Around Trucks If you can't see their mirrors, they can't see you.

Safe Following Distance

Apply the 3-second rule, increase it in rain or fog. Tailgating is aggressive and risky.

Don't Pass Vehicles Stopped at Crosswalks They may be yielding to a pedestrian you can't see.

Yield to Buses Rejoining Traffic

California law says let the bus merge—don't race them.

SEE THESE?



DO THIS.



MOVE OVER FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES

#MOVEOVER



COMMON COURTESY

Let Merging Drivers In
It's not a contest. A brief slowdown can ease congestion and tension.



Use the Zipper Merge During Lane Closures
Take turns merging at the closure point—it's faster and safer than early merging.

1 and 1

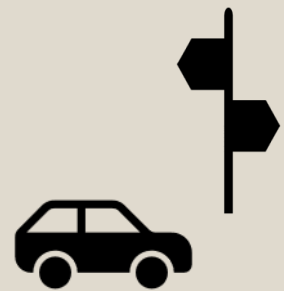
Wave or Nod Thanks When Yielded

To Acknowledging others builds mutual respect. No one likes being ignored.



Dim High Beams Around Other Vehicles

Blinding other drivers is rude and risky. Flip to low beams when near others.



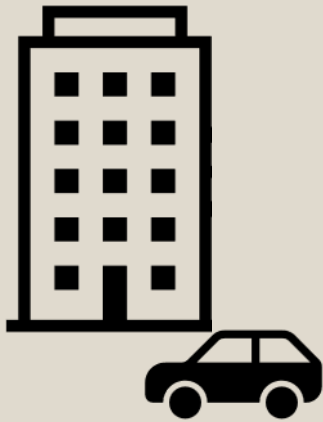
Don't Honk Aggressively

Use your horn to alert—not express frustration.

Prolonged honking is intimidation.



TRESY BOOSTERS



Don't Double Park or Block Driveways

Even briefly—this causes chaos and blocks emergency access.



Be Patient in Parking Lots

Rushing through or tailgating in tight quarters leads to fender benders and conflict.



Give Cyclists

Adequate Space

At least 3 feet by law.

They're more vulnerable and deserve room.

Check Before Turning or Changing Lanes

- Always look over your shoulder and check mirrors—cyclists can be in your blind spot.
- Signal early to alert cyclists of your intent.

REMINDER TO COUNTY DRIVERS

When you're behind the wheel of a County vehicle, you're not just driving— You're representing Riverside County.

The public is watching, so:

- Drive respectfully
- Follow all traffic laws
- Stay alert for pedestrians and cyclists
- Keep safety and courtesy front of mind

Your actions on the road reflect on all of us. Drive like you're being watched—because you are.

"Warning, Guide, Regulate:

Every road sign placed throughout Riverside County serves a clear and vital function—protecting lives, directing traffic, and ensuring smooth travel for both residents and visitors. For county employees, especially those working near roadways, knowing what these signs mean isn't just useful—it's a matter of workplace safety and public responsibility.



Yellow

Warning / Caution Road Conditions

Yellow signs alert us to changing conditions or hazards ahead, but they don't call for a full stop. Think of yellow as a preemptive heads-up—a way to prepare before you commit.

Look For It: Safety cones, hazard tape, and bump zones often follow the yellow color scheme. It's used universally for caution.

THE ABCS OF ROAD SIGNS"



Green Directional or Permission

Green signs are all about movement, guidance, and reassurance. They tell drivers where to go, how far it is, and what's allowed—offering a calming, organized presence on busy roadways.

Quick Tip: Green is never used for warnings or prohibitions—its function is guidance only.



Blue Motorist Services Information

Blue signs offer information that supports, but doesn't control, behavior. Think of these as the helpers of the signage world—providing direction to resources or support services.

Note: ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) signs and accessible route markers often use blue backgrounds with white text for clarity and inclusivity.

The Importance of Road Sign Identification

Road sign identification is critical for maintaining safety, order, and efficiency on the road. Responding appropriately to signs ensures drivers comply with legal requirements, avoid hazards, and navigate complex traffic environments confidently. From construction zones to school crossings, road signs provide essential information that helps prevent accidents and protect pedestrians, workers, and employees operating vehicles or working near roadways. Understanding road signs is not just a legal requirement; it's a vital skill that promotes workplace safety and public trust.



Red Regulatory Immediate Action

Red means business. It's used for signs that require an immediate stop or prohibit certain actions. Red signals urgency and demands full attention, and that's no accident.

Fun Fact: Red has the longest wavelength of any visible color, which is why our eyes see it from farther away—it's designed to get noticed.

Brown Recreational or Scenic Guidance

Brown signs are used to identify parks, cultural sites, and public facilities—important for tourism and resident access. National parks, historical landmarks, or scenic areas.

Did you know; Yellowstone was the first national park in the world, established in 1872—before the concept even existed elsewhere. It's home to geysers, bison, and the idea that nature deserves protection.

road. Recognizing and
d hazards, and navigate
each sign communicates
and other motorists. For
t a legal obligation—it's a

Some signs use multiple colors to layer meaning. For example:

- School Zone Signs use yellow-green for extra visibility.
- Fluorescent Pink Signs (rare) may be used for emergency management situations like chemical spills or incident scenes.



White Regulatory or Legal Requirements

White signs are used for rules—posted speed limits, lane directions, parking zones, and other enforceable behaviors.

Remember: Ignoring a white sign often means a citation, or worse—a safety incident..



Orange Temporary Warning or Construction

Orange signs mean something is different right now. Whether due to a construction zone, detour, or roadway hazard, orange warns drivers that

Watch Your Speed: Many jurisdictions double fines in orange-zone areas to reinforce caution during temporary hazards.

STRESS MA

*“Stress is caused by being ‘here’ but wanting to be ‘there.’ –
Eckhart Tolle*

Stress is an unavoidable part of life. If we respond positively to stressful situations, we can learn and grow in ways that wouldn't be possible otherwise. But too much stress can harm our well-being in many ways – from causing physical illness to overwhelming us mentally. Stress is invisible, but its impact isn't.

Stress can manifest in subtle ways. Employees are encouraged to watch for:

- Frequent headaches or fatigue
- Irritability or mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Increased absenteeism or presenteeism

While stress may feel overwhelming at times, it's important to remember that it's not insurmountable. Recognizing the signs early is the first step toward regaining control. With the right strategies and support systems in place, employees can effectively manage stress, improve their well-being, and maintain a safe and productive work environment. The following tips are designed to help you navigate workplace challenges with resilience and confidence.

MANAGEMENT

1. **Microbreaks:** Take 2–5 minute breaks every hour to stretch, breathe, look away from your monitor and/or step outside.
2. **Prioritize Tasks:** Use the Eisenhower Decision Matrix listed below to differentiate urgent vs. important tasks.
3. **Set Boundaries:** Avoid checking emails after work hours unless critical.
4. **Peer Support:** Lean on coworkers and/or the employee assistance program (EAP) for support.
5. **Mindfulness Moments:** Practice deep breathing or guided meditation during lunch breaks.



FALL PROTECTION

CHANGES TO FALL PROTECTION CAL/OSHA REGULATIONS AS OF JULY 1, 2025!

Falls are among the most common reasons for workplace injuries and fatalities in California. Falls generally occur when employees are working at an elevated height and are not adequately protected. Some examples include employees working on elevated work surfaces, ladders, stairs, scaffolds, aerial devices, suspended staging, catwalks and walkways. **Starting July 1, 2025, Cal/OSHA is reducing the fall protection trigger height from 15 feet to 6 feet for construction and roofing work.** This means that when working on surfaces 6 feet or more above a lower level, employers must implement fall protection measures, such as guardrails, safety nets, scaffolding, or personal fall arrest systems.

Fall Protection systems:

There are 2 basic fall protection systems, Passive systems, such as guardrails, are the preferred system of fall protection. If passive systems cannot be utilized, then personal fall protection is required.

- **Passive Systems** - Fall Prevention -Guardrails, safety nets, floor covers, catch platforms, etc.
- **Active Systems** - Personal Fall Protection -Safety belts and body harnesses.

PASSIVE FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS



Guardrails



Barricades



Netting



Hole Covers



Warning Lines



ANCHORAGES



BODY WEAR



CONNECTORS



DEVICES

Common Passive System components:

Guard rails are required at 7.5' high on open:

- Edges of floors and roofs
- Scaffolds
- Elevated platforms

Major design specifications:

- Constructed of wood or equivalent material.
- Top rail at 42" to 45" and a midrail.
- Wooden posts must be no more than 8' apart.
- Top rail must withstand 200 lbs load in any direction.

Components of an active personal fall protection system:

- Anchorage points must support adequate loads.
- Harness (or body belt for fall restraint or positioning) must be worn as per manufacturer instructions.
- Connector (lanyard) must be adjusted so worker will not reach the ground below.
- Free fall distance must never exceed 6 feet.