



Why Your Boots Are Not Welding Boots

A closer look at the Welding Processes Code of Practice by Safe Work Australia and how this relates to your work boots.

If Your Welding Boots Have Laces, They Are Not Welding Boots...

Many large project sites in Australia have made it mandatory that all workers wear lace-up, zip sided boots to prevent rolled ankles and allow for quick removal. This may make sense for the majority of workers - but not for welders.

The Welding Processes Code of Practice released by Safe Work Australia states that foot protection

worn by welders should be “non-slip, heat and fire resistant”² and that “welders should avoid using foot protection that has the potential to capture hot sparks and metal debris”², using ‘laces’ as an example of what NOT to wear. Simply put, if your welding boots have laces, they are not welding boots and they put you at risk.

Foot protection (e.g. boots and shoes)	Hot metal debris, other metal debris and electric shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Foot protection should be non-slip and be heat and fire resistant. Avoid using foot protection that has the potential to capture hot sparks and metal debris, for example in laces or in open style shoes.■ For further information refer to: AS/NZS 2210: (series) Occupational protective footwear and AS/NZS 2210.1: Safety, protective and occupational footwear - Guide to selection, care and use.
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Welding Processes Code Of Practice, Safe Work Australia, Page 24, April 2016

One Size Does Not Fit All

Safety, protective and occupational footwear should be worn to reduce injuries to feet. Different situations or work duties pose different risks therefore it's important to identify the specific risk/s associated with each duty. What is good for the majority may not be good for all.

Welders are exposed to unique risks that other workers may not encounter. These include heat, spatter, sparks and potentially flames. Welders wear unique Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like welding helmets, welding gloves and welding aprons, so why are they not wearing appropriate welding boots?

Making it mandatory that welders wear boots with laces while welding is increasing the risk to welders' health and safety. It is not suitable for the nature of the work that welders carry out each day. Laces introduce a new hazard to the welder as molten metal, sparks and hot debris are collected in a focused capture point. The burn risk to the welder is significantly increased, especially if the boots worn are not heat or fire resistant.



Credit: Cliff Vince
Unfortunately laces burnt away and welders “making do” is an all too common sight on site.

The Burning Issue

Burns are one of the most common injuries associated with welding. Care should always be taken to identify and eliminate risk. “200,000 Australians suffer burns annually with a cost to the Australian community of over \$150 million dollars per annum”¹. The majority of these injuries could easily be avoided with the correct PPE and/or safety precautions in place.

Who is Responsible for Welder Safety in the Workplace in Australia?

The employer has the primary duty to ensure that welders are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from welding duties. If PPE, like welding boots, “are to be used at the workplace, the person conducting the business or undertaking must ensure the equipment is selected to minimise risk to health and safety by ensuring that the equipment is suitable for the nature of the work and any hazard associated with the work”².

How to Select the Right Boot for Welding

“When PPE is worn by workers, it should not introduce other hazards to the worker”². Boots that are provided to welders should be suitable for welding and in alignment with The Welding Processes Code of Practice released by Safe Work Australia.



“Welders wear unique PPE like welding helmets, welding gloves and welding aprons so why are they not wearing appropriate welding boots?”



Finally a Boot Built Specifically for Welders

The J alas Titan Welding Boot from Ejendals is purpose built for tough welding environments and has quickly become the welding boot of choice in the metal fabrication industry in many countries around the world. Compulsory on many large welding sites with thousands of pairs sold each year, these best sellers have just launched in Australia and New Zealand.

Compound tested at 300°C with Kevlar threaded seams these welding boots provide the highest level of protection. Featuring an aluminium toecap, nail protection and an outsole resistant to heat, penetration, water and oil. These welding boots are perfect for the metal fabrication industry, specifically built for welders and are compliant with Australian & New Zealand Standard AS/ NZS2210.3:2009.



Upgrade to the Titan

With an excellent grip regardless of the conditions and Thinsulate heat insulation these welding boots combine comfort with durability. JALAS safety footwear from Finland is the most technically advanced on the market. With 100 years of experience in the safety footwear industry their reputation for comfort, shock absorption and fit is legendary.

Built with a leather protected quick release Velcro side, these boots offer the welder convenient slip-on/slip-off application, superior ankle support and eliminate flammable slag collection areas like shoelaces or zips.

Finally there is a welding boot built specifically for welders. If you wear a welding helmet and welding gloves, it's time you wore welding boots.



After too many burnt laces this Queensland welder upgraded to the Titan.





More Information

If you'd like more information on welding hazards or welding personal protective equipment please contact AWS at www.awsi.com.au

www.awsi.com.au

¹ <https://www.fionawoodfoundation.com/our-challenge/current-statistics/>

² Welding Processes Code Of Practice, Safe Work Australia, April 2016



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