



# A Guide to HSE's GRIP Scheme

Inspiring learning for all



## 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 by RIDDOR in 2017/18. Yet, workplace slips are preventable.

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

Their footwear rating scheme, GRIP, provides free information about the slip performance of footwear that will help your purchasing decision. Recently, NIOSH completed a randomised controlled trial of GRIP-rated footwear involving 17,000 US catering workers and found that, compared to their usual footwear, it reduced injury claims by 67 %. Interestingly, their usual footwear should have been slip resistant, as this was a requirement of their uniform. This study therefore not only shows the benefits that appropriately specified footwear can provide, it also highlights the need for a reliable way of establishing footwear slip resistance.

As a footwear buyer, you can use HSE's research, and that of the NIOSH, to enable you to choose the most appropriate slip resistant shoes for your employees, and help reduce slip accidents and the associated business costs.



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

The GRIP scheme was launched by HSL (now HSE Science Division) 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 was 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 water contaminated tile.
- For 4 and 5 star ratings, the footwear has to meet the requirements of a 3 star rating, but also needs to achieve a specified level of grip when the tile is contaminated with glycerol.



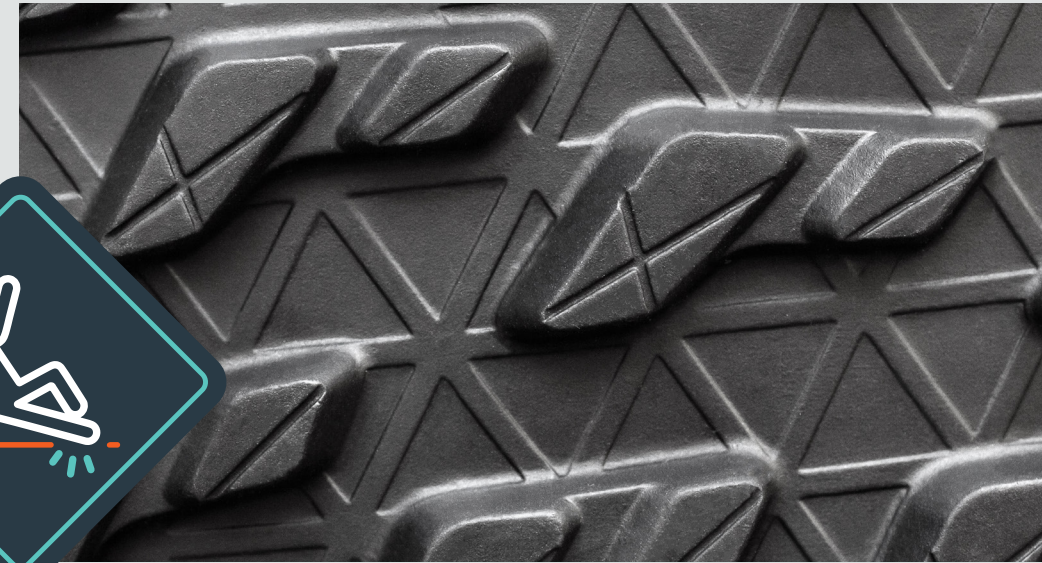
## How does the GRIP scheme help to prevent workplace slips?

**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 need to be considered will be different between organisations and will vary depending on the job role and workplace.**

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

Where footwear is identified as a control measure, the GRIP scheme helps you to make an informed purchasing decision. The GRIP scheme helps you make an informed purchasing decision and specify footwear with appropriate levels of slip resistance for your workplace.

For more guidance on how to use the GRIP scheme, click here: <https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/2020/08/hse-guidance-for-specifying-footwear-slip-resistance>





## 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. As the GRIP scheme is the only means by which footwear slip resistance performance can be reliably assessed, 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. The results of the NIOSH research provides solid scientific evidence to support this.

## Are you a footwear manufacturer?

The interest that the GRIP scheme has generated among footwear purchasers 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>



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