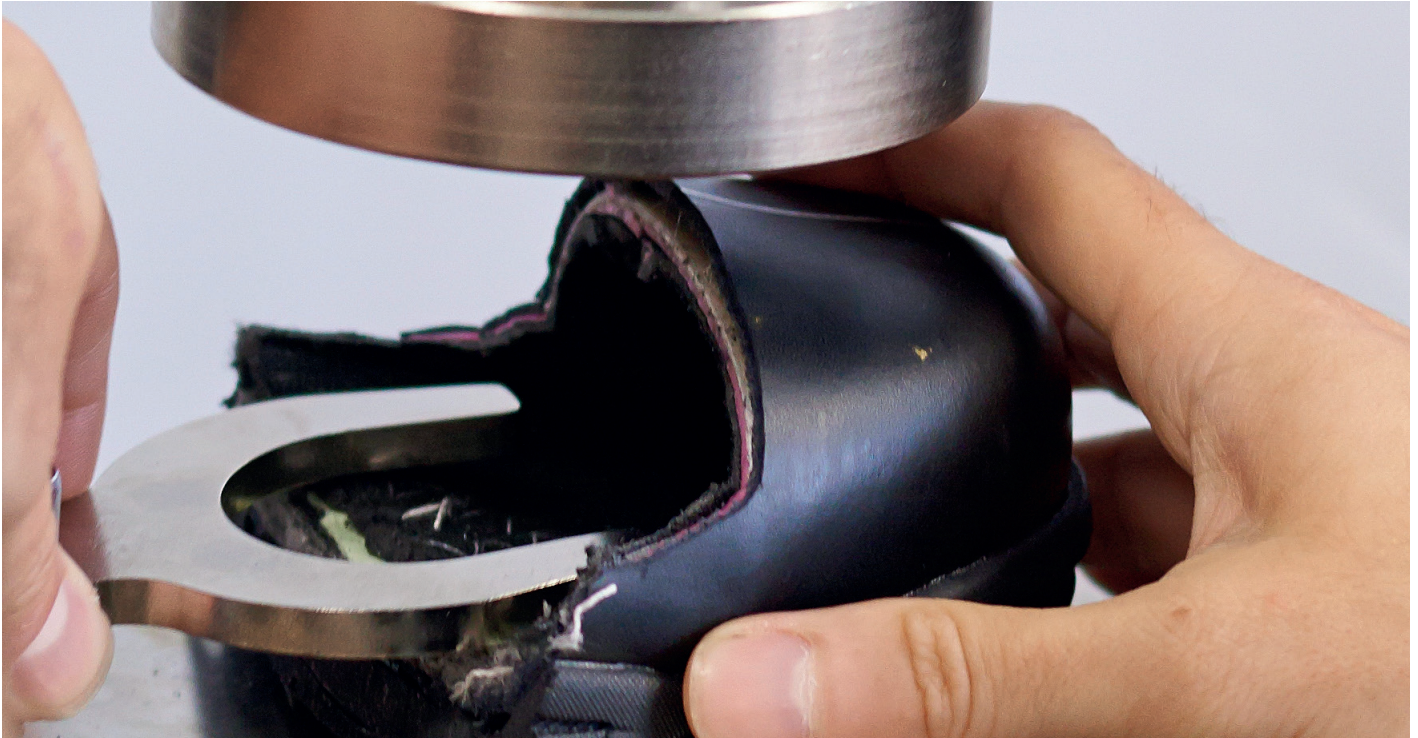


Non Compliant Toecaps

www.arco.co.uk/advice_footwear



Background

Arco's UKAS accredited laboratory ran compression tests on ranges of safety footwear, which revealed that despite carrying EN approvals, many models failed to comply with the standards against which they were originally certified.

Protective toe caps were traditionally made from steel however; more recently non-metallic toe caps are often the product of choice. There are a number of different non-metallic toe caps available on the market, but they do not all perform alike.

The Findings

- 4 out of 10 boots containing non metallic toecaps, failed the standard compression test *
- Glass fibre composite caps performed as they should.
- 4 footwear styles containing thermoplastic caps did not.

What does the BSIF say?

"This situation poses an obvious risk to end users, and is a timely reminder that only relying on the CE certification for certain product types is no guarantee of ongoing quality assurance."

The BSIF is calling on all those in the industry to make doubly certain and ensure that their supply routes are fully aligned to providing safe, legal and fit for purpose PPE.

What is Arco doing about this issue?

- We do not specify or allow injection moulded thermoplastic toe caps into our own brand safety footwear.
- We will continue to routinely test Arco safety footwear in our UKAS accredited product assurance laboratory to ensure ongoing compliance
- If any product fails a standard safety test, and renders the product unsafe, we immediately quarantine the whole batch and recall as necessary.
- We will continue to ensure the manufacturing quality and compliance through our 5 Stage Product Assurance Process.
- We will continue to pass any product compliance failure data on to the BSIF.

* According to EN Standard 20345 and test method EN20344

What can you do?

- Ask suppliers for a Declaration of Conformity that shows original certification of the safety footwear you are purchasing
- Ask suppliers about their process of quality assurance at the factory to ensure the products being manufactured, are as they were originally certified.
- Ask suppliers about their process of sample testing to ensure safety products continue to meet the required standards.
- Ensure your suppliers are members of the BSIF Registered Safety Suppliers Scheme.
- Always buy from a trusted source. When selecting your safety supplier, there's no room for doubt.

Further help

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to call your Arco Sales Manager or visit www.arco.co.uk/advice_footwear



Frequently asked questions

Q: What was the problem with these toecaps?

A: In the footwear that failed the test, the toe caps had been made with injection moulded plastic and not with glass fibre composite material. These toecaps may not protect the wearer's toes, potentially leaving the individual severely injured with crushed or severed toes in the event of a compression accident.

Q: Were the failed footwear counterfeit products with fake certificates and markings?

A: No, The EC type approval and CE marks for compliance were genuine. In reality the certification process has its limitations as it allows a manufacturer to send products for testing until they achieve a pass result. The EC Type approval is then valid for the life of the product or a minimum of five years and manufacturers then should not swap components for cheaper alternatives without re-testing the product.

Q: How can products have genuine markings but be so dangerous to use?

A: Products are tested and meet the required standard but over a period of time, the key components may have been changed without further testing. So the product may no longer be safe. Manufacturers and importers should carry out ongoing sample testing to ensure that production standards are maintained throughout the life of the product, sadly, this may not always be the case.