

MCC Guidance for purchasing the right Work boot

Your feet are your most important tool. Take the time to find boots that fit well and will continue to protect your feet throughout the season. Spending a little extra money upfront will eliminate having to buy a replacement pair in the middle of the season.

Purchasing your first pair of boots for trail work can be a daunting task. There are many options out there and prices can vary greatly. There are a few things to keep in mind when searching for your new pair of boots and this guide will help to navigate that purchase. This guide is split into 2 basic types of boot based on primary duties.

Trail Boots - Also “Backpacking boots”. Meant for crews whose primary duty will include trail work or long-distance trekking.

Regardless of brand, find boots that fit snugly and will keep your feet dry. Unoccupied space in your boots will make your feet more susceptible to blistering during long hikes. Boots must be durable enough to handle the rigours of work including long hikes with heavy packs, and digging with hand tools.

Recommended:

Mostly or all leather

7" tall (or tall enough to support ankles)

Lug sole (meaning aggressive tread)

Look for waterproof brands that maintain breath-ability.

Common brands of trail boots:

Asolo

Salomon

Scarpa

La Sportiva

Lowa

Merrell

Danner

Vasque

Keen

Not recommend:

Steel toe or safety toe

No light hikers

Mesh construction or lots of seams

Style Example:



Saw Boots - Also “fire boots” or “logger boots”. Meant specifically for crews that will be primarily running a chainsaw or fighting fire, but also great for general work.

Many MCC crews can expect to be “off-trail” for much of their season. This can involve steep terrain with difficult footing, often packing a chainsaw or a backpack sprayer. High ankle support is necessary. Waterproof and insulated options might be nice for certain regions or specialty crews, but check with your regional staff.

Recommended:

All leather or cut resistant (required for chainsaw crews)

NFPA approved (for wildland fire crews)

8" tall or higher (required for saws and fire)

Lace up

Lug sole (meaning aggressive tread)

Not recommend:

Steel toe or safety toe

No light hikers

No “pull-on” style boots (cowboy boots)

Common and recommended brands of saw boots:

*Note: This is by no means an exhaustive list, just some of the tried and true options out there. Prices range from about \$150-500.

Danner Logger or Quarry Boots

Whites Smoke Jumpers (\$\$)

Hawthorn Explorer (best bang for buck)

Georgia Boot

Carolina (many styles)

Chippewa (many styles)

Redwings

Irish Setter (Mesabi style 83829)

Style example:



Other Helpful notes on foot care:

Look for synthetic or wool socks. Cotton holds moisture against your skin and can be the cause of blisters and rubs on your feet. In cold weather cotton will not keep your feet warm once they are damp.

Notes on preventing and caring for blisters:

- 1. Keep feet as dry as possible*
- 2. Switch out socks at lunch if you are working in water.*
- 3. Dry feet properly after a river crossing. (suggestion: a bandanna or pack towel.)*
- 4. Socks full of holes can rub your feet the wrong way. Solution: New socks.*
- 5. As soon as you feel a "hot-spot" or rubbing, treat with a moleskin cushion.*
- 6. If a puffy, gross blister appears, DO NOT tear the skin off. Simply sterilize a needle and the blister itself and poke a small hole at the lower edge of blister. Let it drain. Repeat 3x a day as necessary.*
- 7. If you remove any blister-skin, treat as an open wound: keep clean, and treat with topical antibiotic.*