May 2026
IN TOUCH
EHS Newsletter

SAFETECH
Environment
Health
Safety

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SAFETY FOOTWEAR STANDARDS

EN ISO 20345:2022

For many years, South African safety professionals have depended on the EN ISO 20345:2011 standard (locally adopted as SANS 20345) as the benchmark for compliant safety footwear. However, advances in materials, evolving workplace risks and improved testing methods have made an update necessary. Enter EN ISO 20345:2022.

This revision marks the most extensive and impactful update to safety footwear certification in more than a decade. In South Africa, the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993) places full accountability on employers to supply PPE that is suitable for the specific risks workers face.

Using outdated standards or misunderstanding the capabilities of older footwear categories can compromise worker safety and significantly increase a company's exposure to penalties and claims under the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA).

The introduction of the EN ISO 20345:2022 standard is a significant improvement in industrial safety, not just administrative change. It brings much-needed clarity by defining waterproof protection more precisely, refining puncture resistance categories for modern materials and standardising slip resistance requirements. Overall, it enables procurement managers to make more accurate, informed decisions when selecting safety footwear.

What the updated standard represents

- Waterproof safety footwear has moved from confusing extra labels, to clearly defined, purpose-built categories, making selection much simpler and more reliable.
- Puncture protection has evolved from a generic checkbox into a hazard-specific specification; selecting the right rating is now critical for actual safety.
- Slip resistance has moved from a selectable rating to a built-in minimum requirement, with new markings only for special cases.
- Safety footwear is now more specialised and clearly labelled, enabling smarter, job-specific selection.

https://ohsonline.com/articles/2025/09/26/decoding-safety-footwear-standards.aspx?Page=4
https://vghsafety.co.za/2026/04/11/the-2026-guide-to-south-african-safety-footwear-standards-en-iso-203452022/

GAMIFICATION

A growing approach in occupational safety training is gamification, which applies game-like mechanics to both training and on-the-job situations to strengthen compliance and increase engagement with safety principles and procedures. It offers:

- Increased engagement
- Better retention
- Behavioural change
- Instant feedback
- Increased motivation
- Customised content

The incorporation of games into safety training can shift an organisation's culture in a more positive direction, by causing employees and management to think of safety training as important, helpful and even enjoyable - rather than a tedious chore intended mostly to ensure regulatory compliance.

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CONTACT US TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FOR YOUR BUSINESS:

- Occupational Hygiene Surveys
- EHS Risk Assessments
- Ergonomics Risk Assessments
- EHS Management System Development and Implementation
- Environmental Monitoring
- Identification of EHS Legal Requirements and Compliance Audits
- Internal Auditor Training
- Specialised EHS Training

Department of Employment and Labour Approved Inspection Authority (OH0049-CI-09)

OH0049

OHAIA-A 005 (2026)

Safetrain cc t/a Safetech is a SANAS Accredited Inspection Body
Refer to www.sanas.co.za for Scope of Accreditation

Mould VS Mildew

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT

Distinguishing between harmless surface growth and harmful fungal contamination is essential for maintaining a safe workplace, safeguarding employee health and meeting regulatory requirements. Early identification of potentially toxic substances helps reduce health risks, prevent structural damage and avoid costly legal consequences.

Although black mould and mildew may initially look alike, they differ in:

- appearance
- growth patterns
- potential risks

In order to grow and spread, black mould needs: moisture, oxygen, optimal temperatures (between 4.4 - 38 degrees celcius) and materials that contain a lot of cellulose (including paper products, wood products and drywall).

Black mould releases spores that can become airborne, along with microbial volatile organic compounds (mVOCs) that produce a characteristic musty or unpleasant odour.

In individuals with allergies, exposure to these spores or compounds may trigger symptoms when the immune system overreacts, releasing chemicals that cause inflammation in the nose, eyes and lungs. Even those without allergies may still experience irritation from mVOCs.

For people with weakened immune systems (such as those with immunodeficiency conditions or taking immune-suppressing medications) exposure to black mould can pose a greater risk, potentially leading to fungal infections (mycoses) in the respiratory tract or other areas of the body.

RECOGNISING THE DIFFERENCES

MILDEW

Appearance
a powdery or dusty consistency that is easy to brush off.

Growth Rate and Depth
spreads quickly under the right conditions but usually remains a surface problem.

Location
often appears on flat, non-porous surfaces.

Potential Risks
While mildew is generally less hazardous than black mould, it can still cause respiratory irritation and allergic reactions, as well as skin and nail infections in some cases.

BLACK MOULD

Appearance
typically has a slimy texture and dark, almost black, colour; has a persistent musty smell.

Growth Rate and Depth
penetrates deeper into materials, often causing structural damage.

Location
commonly found in areas with ongoing water damage or poor ventilation (behind walls and under carpets).

Potential Risks
Exposure to black mould can cause a range of serious health problems, including respiratory symptoms such as coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing; as well as possible neurological effects in sensitive individuals. It may also worsen existing medical conditions.

https://www.oshaeducationcenter.com/toxic-black-mold-vs-mildew
https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24862-black-mold