

Letter to Branches

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To: All Postal Branches

Dear Colleagues

New Royal Mail Standard Issue Footwear - Introduction of new Mk 2 "Uprated" Hi-Tech Magnum Footwear Shoes & Boots and Introduction of Dr Martens and CAT (Caterpillar) Shoes & Boots as part of new extended range:

Previous LTBs on this subject; LTBs 1110/07, 038/08, 76/08, 224/08, 254/08, 412/08 and 794/08 all refer.

This is to update Branches and Safety Representatives on developments since the issue of LTB 794/08 on 21 October 2008, following the most recent discussions with Royal Mail.

Mk 2 "Uprated" Hi-Tech Magnum Footwear Shoes & Boots

The background to this problem is well known to Branches and Safety Representatives in respect of the widespread concerns reported to the Health, Safety and Environment Department regarding the poor slip resistance and durability of the Mk 1 'Magnum Hi-Tech' footwear, shoe and boot introduced in September 2007. A significant number of slips and falls accidents were reported, linked to the footwear.

As previously reported the agreed plan of action was to introduce a new improved footwear design and "Uprated" Mk 2 versions of the Hi-Tech Magnum Footwear Shoes and Boots were produced which had a new sole design and compound to improve slip resistance on wet, frosted and steel surfaces and full grain water-resistant leather uppers. The redesigned Mk 2 shoes and boots were extensively tested by "SATRA" and the HSE's Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) for slip-resistance and the results demonstrated an improvement over the old range.

Delivery to Royal Mail of the first bulk order of the improved Mk 2 design Hi-Tech Magnum footwear design commenced in September 2008, phasing them in as the stocks of the old Mk 1 versions were exhausted. Three Delivery Offices were chosen to pilot the Mk 2 design Hi-Tech Magnum footwear which was Saltcoats DO, St Austell DO, Armagh DO and feedback was positive.

The new version Mk 2 design Hi-Tech Magnum range have been in use now for several months, and are now being issued in all sizes. Royal Mail Assets have surveyed wearers, and the results are positive (see attached summary). The National Uniform Manager reports to have had no more than a couple of complaints since the Mk 2 design Hi-Tech Magnum range was introduced last September, and in general feedback is that the 'slip-resistance' and 'durability' are much better than the

previous Mk 1 range, with no compromise on comfort.

Dr Martens and CAT (Caterpillar) Shoes & Boots

Discussions have continued with Royal Mail Letters regarding the key issue of how to get more staff to wear standard issue footwear as there are a large number of people who do not wear Royal Mail shoes and boots.

Royal Mail Letters now recognise that the style of footwear that people prefer is very much an individual choice and that a single type is therefore unlikely to suit each of the 140,000 wearers. In accepting the fact that the current footwear does not meet all the requirements of the workforce and with large numbers of non-wearers, Royal Mail Letters cannot be confident that non-uniform alternative footwear meets necessary standards of safety. Royal Mail needs to reduce the high number of Slips and Trips accidents and ensuring that the workforce have suitable shoes and boots which they feel confident wearing will improve safety and contribute to a reduction in accidents.

To improve the level of choice and obviate the reason for staff not to wear Royal Mail issue shoes and boots, Royal Mail Letters will be introducing four additional types of occupational footwear from two manufacturers to complement the Hi-Tech Magnum shoe and boot range.

These will be:

- Dr Martens shoes and boots, manufactured by Airwair.
- CAT shoes and boots, manufactured by Caterpillar.

These footwear manufacturers have a high level of brand recognition and a solid reputation in both retail and workwear environments and will therefore hopefully offer the suitable alternative options for all Royal Mail Letters wearers. Royal Mail Letters will also be adding similar choices to the PPE Safety footwear range. Existing allocations will remain unchanged and individuals will be entitled to select one type of shoe or boot.

Before the Dr Martens and CAT ranges are introduced as general issues, both types have been sent to SATRA and the HSE's Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) to conduct tests to confirm that they meet Royal Mail's safety standards following which trials will be run at a number of operational units to ensure their suitability.

Royal Mail Letters expectation is that the number of options being offered once the new ranges are added will enable all employees to have uniform footwear in which they'll be safe, comfortable and smart and that there will be no reason for anyone to wear their own shoes and not to want to wear the shoes or boots from the ranges on offer.

Royal Mail Letters believe that the significant investment in the new footwear ranges will represent a worthwhile improvement in safety and well-being of employees.

To date some small scale trials of the Dr Martens and CAT shoes and boots footwear are being run (not safety versions) in Saltcoats DO, Armagh DO and Plymouth DO, and to date we are informed that there is generally positive initial feedback.

Royal Mail Letters are awaiting the Lab Test Results and delivery lead in times from the manufacturers before wider introduction can be considered and arranged so members should not be encouraged to ring the Uniform Helpline demanding instant

delivery of the new footwear types as these styles are still in the testing and trialing stage and are not yet available to order.

Further reports will be published on a roll out timetable in due course.

Yours Sincerely

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

Bob Gibson
Assistant Secretary
Outdoor

Magnum shoes (current)



Dr Martens shoes



CAT shoes



Magnum boots (current)



Dr Martens boots



CAT boots

