

# TOOLBOX TALK

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## Preventing Trench Foot

Most medical authorities define trench foot as a medical condition caused by prolonged exposure of the feet to damp, unsanitary, and cold conditions. The use of the word trench in the condition name refers to trench warfare, mainly associated with World War I. It is one of many immersion foot syndromes.

Symptoms of trench foot include:

- ◆ A tingling and/or itching sensation
- ◆ Pain
- ◆ Swelling
- ◆ Cold and blotchy skin
- ◆ Numbness
- ◆ A prickly or heavy feeling in the foot.

The foot may be red, dry, and painful after it becomes warm. Blisters may form, followed by skin and tissue dying and falling off. In severe cases, untreated trench foot can involve the toes, heel, or entire foot.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following steps to prevent trench foot.

- ◆ Thoroughly clean and dry your feet.
- ◆ Put on clean, dry socks daily.
- ◆ When sleeping or resting, do not wear socks.

As with any other cold illness, seek medical treatment as soon as possible if you notice the symptoms of trench foot or any other immersion foot condition.



**Trench foot knows no season! Prolonged exposure to wet sock and boots at any temperature may result in trench foot. Invest in a boot dryer for use year around and always carry an extra pair of socks and footwear with you.**