



Have you ever wondered if there is a TBA policy on wearing everyday footwear whilst on the lanes? Is there any safety law with regards to specific bowling footwear? Do you legally have to wear bowling shoes whilst playing?

There is no specific TBA Rule that requires bowlers to wear bowling shoes. The policy on whether a bowler must wear bowling shoes is determined by each bowling centre.

The Chairman of the ABPA (Australian Bowling Centre Proprietors Association) answers some common questions below.

Q: Are bowling shoes required during league and competition play?

A: TBA's only rule relating to shoes is Rule 125 'Approaches Must Not Be Defaced'. This rule prohibits soft rubber soles and heels that rub off on the approach.

Q: Why do you have to wear bowling shoes?

A: Bowling shoes are specialized footwear designed to use with the timber or synthetic approaches in a bowling centre. For centre owners and proprietors, the use of bowling shoes by customers whilst bowling is a requirement for workplace health and safety.

Safety - It is for the customers' safety that a specifically designed bowling shoe must be worn when bowling. The bowling shoe is designed to 'slide' on the approach.

Damage to the Approach - The wearing of 'street shoes' on the bowling approach can cause damage, scuffing or marking the floor and you could also bring in dirt and moisture from outside. If a bowler then steps on that, they can stick on the approach, fall, getting hurt. Moisture, humidity or a slippery or sticky substance on the sole of a shoe can cause a fall and serious injury.

Bowling centres are trying to avoid accidents and avert danger for the customers. Bowling shoes, whether your own or the rented ones, are made to slide across the floor easily, and don't damage the wood or synthetic approaches. They're also free of dirt and debris that street shoes will have on them.

Rule 125 APPROACHES MUST NOT BE DEFACED

The application of any foreign substance on any part of the approach that detracts from the possibility of other players having normal conditions is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, such substances as talcum powder, pumice and resin on shoes; also soft rubber soles or heels that rub off on the approach are prohibited.