

With all the uncertainty going on in the world due to COVID-19, HAIX knows many of our customers are putting themselves on the front lines of the pandemic. Firefighters, EMT's and Law Enforcement professionals can be exposed to blood, body fluids, and viruses while on the job, so safety and protection are of the highest priority. Many HAIX customers ask what they should do if their boots get exposed to blood or body fluids, especially those of a potentially infected patient. We are here to answer some of those questions. While nothing can 100% guarantee non-transmission of COVID-19 or any other pathogen, or the 100% elimination of viruses from your footwear, we can provide guidance on keeping yourself protected with regard to your footwear, from the inside out.

Many HAIX boots feature a CROSSTECH® inner liner that makes them not only waterproof and highly breathable, but also resistant to chemicals, bloodborne pathogens and body fluids. The microscopic pores of the membrane are 20,000 times smaller than a drop of water but 700 times larger than one vapor molecule. Water, and most chemicals or pathogens, cannot penetrate the liner while perspiration vapor can easily escape. This can protect your feet on the inside.

For the outside of your footwear, most cleaning can be done with a soft cloth or brush and mild soap and water. Industry assumptions have historically been that rubber boots are easier to decontaminate than leather boots. But a study by GORE® found that rubber boots could potentially retain higher levels of chemicals compared to leather boots after normal wash and air-dry decontamination procedures. To read more on the Gore study, go to <https://www.goreprotectivefabrics.com/sites/g/files/ypyipe916/files/uploads/tof/tof-fire/pdf/Footwear%20Decon%20Article%20-%20Fire%20Engineering%20Reprint.pdf>

If you have had a potential exposure to a chemical, virus, bacteria or fungus, HAIX has some recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting your footwear. Remove footwear from service until they can be cleaned and disinfected. (Please note this pertains to exposures to the exterior of your boots and not direct exposure to the interior of your boots or inner liner).

- Using protective gloves, hand wash HAIX footwear in a utility sink with warm water and a wet shoe brush or other soft brush. Do not use heavy abrasion or scrubbing.
- Do not use saddle soaps or soaps that contain fats.
- Do not use bleach or chlorinated detergents as even small amounts of chlorine will reduce the protective qualities.
- Do not use detergent, mild dish soap is recommended.
- Use water less than 110 degrees F.
- If desired, the insole can be removed and washed in a washing machine in cold water on delicate. Air-dry the insoles.
- Air-dry your footwear, removing the insole. Drying racks provide maximum air exposure and reduce drying time. Do not dry footwear in direct/indirect sunlight or fluorescent light.

Do not machine dry. Do not dry in front of open windows, hot ovens, or radiators. Dry slowly.

- Always clean your HAIX footwear separately from other items.

HAIX recommends decontamination of the exterior leather with a disinfectant spray that is strong enough to kill the most dangerous viruses, yet safe enough to use on children's toys. Disinfectants used on HAIX boots need to have an EPA IV toxicity rating; the lowest rating assigned by the Federal EPA and be rated to not cause skin irritation associated with traditional disinfectants. This would be safest for the leather. The disinfectant must be strong enough to kill the most dangerous viruses (Norovirus) and bacteria (MRSA) in a hospital environment, and EPA registered for use on children's toys at home. Disinfectant spray must meet the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) criteria for use against the spread of COVID-19 and be registered by the EPA to kill human Coronavirus with its demonstrated effectiveness against these pathogens. Disinfectant should contain no alcohol, bleach or other toxic ingredients. One example of a disinfectant spray that meets the above criteria is PureGreen24. Always follow the manufacturer's directions for use.

Once your boots are clean and dry, maintain the exterior leather footwear with a professional grade silicone-based polish such as our HAIX polish. Petroleum based products may be flammable and may significantly reduce the flame or heat resistance of your footwear as well as affect the leather's breathability.

For further information on the use and care of HAIX NFPA footwear go to [https://www.haix.com/us/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2020/03/00676\\_userguide\\_general\\_eng\\_032020.pdf](https://www.haix.com/us/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2020/03/00676_userguide_general_eng_032020.pdf)

To learn more about NFPA 1851 HAIX training in regard to inspection, cleaning and retirement of your HAIX NFPA footwear go to <https://www.haix.com/us/nfpa/>