

Young Workers

ON TOPIC



Young Workers

Young workers are a valuable asset to any organization as they bring new energy and ideas to the workplace. Yet this enthusiasm, coupled with an eagerness to please and a lack of experience, can increase the risk of workplace injuries or illnesses. Each day in Canada, more than 40 workers under the age of 19 are injured on the job. Statistics from the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada (AWCBC) show that new workers have a higher rate of injury, especially during the first six months of employment.

HOW AN EMPLOYER CAN HELP

Ensuring the safety and health of young people in the workplace starts with having a good health and safety management system that protects everyone. Young workers may feel pressured and nervous, especially if it's their first job. They may want to please you, their employer, and to not disappoint their parents. Being so focused on that objective - doing a great job - can lead them to work unsafely. One of the most important things you can do as an employer is make it clear that safety is the young worker's first priority, provide appropriate education, training, and orientation and make sure they know that it is perfectly fine to ask questions.

Assign Suitable Work

Before you even hire a young worker, assess the job and what it entails. What hazards will the worker be exposed to? Will certain situations present new risks? Will the worker ever have to enter a confined space, a hard-to-reach area or some other hazardous spot? Will the worker be handling chemicals, lifting, cleaning or doing some other task that could injure the worker and others in the vicinity?

Match the jobs to the worker. In some cases, a more experienced worker will be better suited for the task. Avoid assigning tasks that require a high degree of skill, lengthy training or a great deal of responsibility to new or young workers. Do not expect a young person to work alone or perform critical or risky tasks, such as handling dangerous chemicals.

Make Time For Training

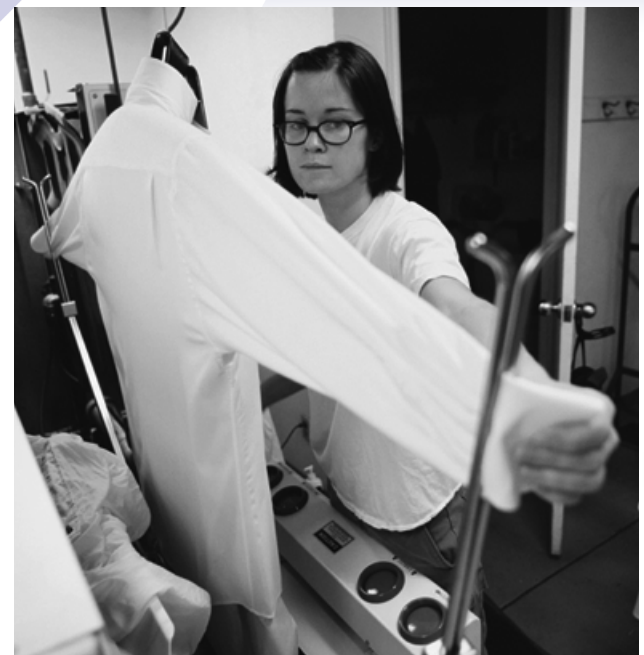
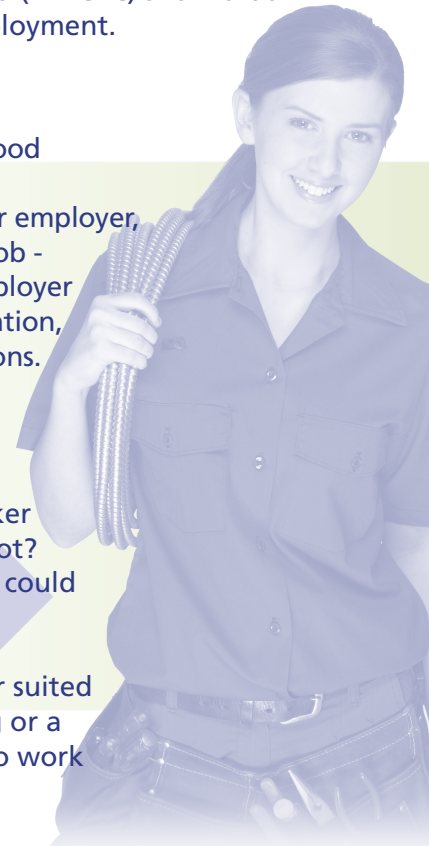
Before young people start work, they must receive effective health and safety orientation and training. This orientation could include the company's health and safety policy, their personal responsibilities, hazards in their workplace, how to protect themselves starting day one, who to go to for advice and what to do if things seem unsafe.

Tell young workers not to perform any task until they have been trained to do it. Encourage the young worker to ask questions at any time, especially about safety. Demonstrate how to do each task the safe way, and show them more than once. Let them practice.

Be accessible. Stick around, watch the worker do the task, and correct any mistakes.

The young worker might feel pressured to get it right the first time, so you can help by being patient and repeating instructions and demonstrating procedures as often as necessary.

Continue to monitor the worker.





Provide Appropriate Safety Equipment and PPE

Provide hands-on training on the correct use of equipment. When you demonstrate how to do a task, remember to discuss safety features and control systems. The young worker should know to keep exit doors free from clutter, for example, and to make sure safety guards on machines stay on and equipment is turned off or disconnected after every shift where necessary.

Provide or ensure that the worker has all necessary personal protective equipment such as safety shoes, goggles or safety glasses, hardhat or gloves, as the job requires. Make sure the young worker knows where to find it, how to use it, and how to care for it.



Supervise

Anyone supervising any other worker must have the knowledge, training or experience to organize work and their performance. Due to a lack of understanding, a young worker may decide to make changes to the job in unexpected and possibly risky ways. Be sure that they are closely supervised, and stick to recognized and safe work procedures. Know the laws and regulations that apply to keeping workers safe on the job, and know what is hazardous - or could be - in the workplace.

Roles and Responsibilities Under the Law

The purpose of workplace health and safety legislation is to protect workers against hazards on the job. It outlines the general rights and responsibilities of the employer, the supervisor and the worker.

Employer's Responsibilities

- to establish and maintain a Health and Safety Committee, or select at least one health and safety representative
- to take every reasonable precaution to ensure safe workplaces
- to train employees about any potential hazards and safe work practices
- to supply personal protective equipment and ensure workers know how to use the equipment safely and properly
- to immediately report all critical injuries to the government department responsible for occupational health and safety or compensation
- to train all employees on how to safely use, handle, store and dispose of hazardous substances and handle emergencies

Worker's Responsibilities

- to work in compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations
- to use personal protective equipment and clothing as directed by the employer
- to report workplace hazards and dangers



WHERE TO START? WE CAN HELP!

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has a number of user-friendly products and services to help you get started.

FREE Web Resources

Young Workers Zone – www.ccohs.ca/youngworkers/

CCOHS has developed a free web portal to provide tips, facts and links for students, parents and employers. This website is designed to help young or new workers stay healthy and safe at work. Employers, parents and teachers can find information as well as tools that will help them prepare young or new workers to venture into the working world on safer footing.

FREE Podcasts – www.ccohs.ca/products/podcasts/



Keeping Young Workers Safe

Special guest Len Hong, CEO of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, shares how employers can help young workers stay safe at work.

Posters – www.ccohs.ca/products/posters/

Young Workers Zone – Display this poster to help get the word out about the importance of workplace health and safety – at any age!

WHMIS Hazard Symbols – This WHMIS Hazard Symbols poster identifies the six different classifications of chemical groups with similar hazards or properties, along with their symbols. Display copies of this poster throughout your workplace to help reinforce knowledge of these critical safety symbols.

Health and Safety Publications – www.ccohs.ca/products/print.html

Orientation for New Workers Guide – provides new workers with an overview of their health and safety rights and responsibilities, hazard recognition, hazard control, preparing for emergencies, and an overview of occupational health and safety programs. It is designed to be both a guide for new workers, as well as a tool that employers can use as part of their workplace-specific orientation training program.

e-Courses



Orientation on Health & Safety for New Workers

The course provides participants with information about their workplace rights under health and safety legislation, the role of health and safety programs in workplaces, and how to identify job-related hazards in order to work safely.



WHMIS for Workers

Learn about WHMIS symbols and their meaning, the labels on products, and material safety data sheets in this introductory, one-hour e-Course.



Violence in the Workplace: Awareness

Workplace violence is a serious issue that affects all business sectors and occupations and the safety and security of every employee and employer—including young and new workers. CCOHS promotes awareness of this very important issue, and as a precursor to the other Workplace Violence e-courses: Recognize the Risk and Take Action and Establish a Prevention Program.

FREE OSH Answers – www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/

Search our easy-to-read answers in fact-sheet format on the web. Topics include:

- How to work safely with very toxic materials
- Violence in the Workplace—Warning Signs
- Internet Harassment or Cyber bullying
- Driving and Ergonomics
- OH&S Legislation in Canada – Basic Responsibilities
- Occupations and Workplaces – Food and Beverage Services, Cooks, Landscapers, Painters, Tree Planters

FREE Need Answers to your Questions?

Contact CCOHS' Inquiries Service at **1-800-668-4284** for confidential help regarding young and new worker-related questions. This free bilingual service is available each business day, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm or via email at clientservices@ccohs.ca.

CCOHS offers many sources of young and new worker-related services including information in our newsletters, presentations and online resources.

Visit www.ccohs.ca