Keeping Young Workers Safe and Healthy



Safety Talk

What's at Stake?
The injury rate for young workers – those under age 25 – is almost twice as high than for workers over 25 and most of these injuries occur within their first 12 months of employment.

What's the Danger?
On average, approximately 500 workers younger than 24 years of age die from workrelated injuries every year, and more than 800,000 are treated for nonfatal injuries in hospital emergency departments each year. While their injuries and illnesses might be similar, young workers face a different set of risk factors than older, more experienced workers. These risk factors include:

- A desire to do a good job and prove themselves, which can lead to doing unsafe things.
- Lack of on-the-job experience and training, including an understanding ofrisks associated with each job.
- Not being aware of their workplace safety rights and responsibilities and what jobs or tasks are illegal for them to perform.
- Hesitancy among many young workers to speak up about safety concerns.
- The feeling of invincibility which many young workers and young people in general have makes them more apt to take risks in and out of work.
- A still-developing sense of cause and effect makes it harder to grasp how an injury today could disable and impact them for life.
- A lack of hazard and risk awareness and the fact that they could be killed at work.

How to Protect Yourself

- Educate yourself on your workplace safety rights and responsibilities and employment laws in your state or province. A quick Internet search can provide a ton of information. **You have a legal right to a safe work environment!**
- During the interview process, ask specific questions about safety training and the company's safety program. Do they provide training specific to your job? Do they have a safety program?
- Be confident that you can do a good job without taking risks and doing things unsafely.
- If something feels or looks unsafe, speak to your supervisor, the safety manager or anyone else who will listen.

- Ask questions if you’re unsure of the right or safe way to do something.
- Attend training sessions and always wear your required personal protective equipment (PPE)!
- Stay in your designated work area. Often, there are hazards outside of your area that you are either not aware of, or not trained to deal with.
- Pay attention to warning signs and know where emergency equipment is located and how to use it.

FINAL WORD

If you think you’re being asked to do unsafe work or feel unsafe at work in general, talk to your supervisor. If you still have concerns, talk to your parents or someone else you trust, about continuing. Remember, no job is worth dying for!