

New and young workers: Keep them safe!

Safe At Work Ontario
Enforcement > Compliance > Partnership >



New and young workers in Ontario are four times more likely to be injured on the job during the first month of employment than at any other time.

Young workers are aged 14 to 24 years. New workers include young workers as well as those aged 25 and older who are on the job for less than six months or who are assigned to a new job.

Between 2006 and 2010, 34 young workers died in work-related incidents, according to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) statistics.

During the same time period, more than 46,000 young workers received injuries resulting in lost time at work, according to WSIB claims statistics.

Most injuries and fatalities can be prevented.

Some general duties of workplace parties

Employers

Employers are required to provide information and instruction to new and young workers on how to protect their health and safety in the workplace. For example, employers must provide information about safe work policies, measures and procedures specific to the workplace and the work the worker will perform. In particular, it is recommended employers provide the instruction in late spring, a common time of year for young people to enter the workforce.

The following are some examples of employers' duties under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA):

- Taking every reasonable precaution to protect workers
- Ensuring workers meet minimum age requirements
- Ensuring equipment, materials and protective devices are well maintained and used, as per manufacturer's instructions
- Ensuring workers are provided with appropriate training, supervision and personal protective equipment
- Preparing and reviewing, at least annually, a written occupational health and safety policy, and developing and maintaining a program to implement that policy
- Posting a copy of the OHSA in the workplace

Supervisors

The following are some examples of supervisors' duties under the OHSA:

- Ensuring workers comply with the OHSA and its regulations
- Ensuring any equipment, protective device or clothing required by the employer is used or worn by workers
- Advising workers of any potential or actual health and safety dangers known by the supervisor
- If prescribed, providing workers with written instructions on measures and procedures to be taken for their protection
- Taking every reasonable precaution in the circumstances for the protection of workers

Workers

The following are some examples of workers' duties under the OHSA:

- being aware of potential hazards
- being trained in safe practices and procedures
- working in compliance with the OHSA and its regulations
- reporting any known workplace hazards or contraventions of the OHSA to the supervisor or employer
- being aware of workers' rights under the OHSA, such as the right to refuse unsafe work

Protecting workers

It is the responsibility of employers, owners, constructors and supervisors to ensure all workplace parties comply with the OHSA and its regulations.

For more information on legal responsibilities, please visit:

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm

Health and safety considerations and best practices

Employers, supervisors and trainers should emphasize the need for new and young workers to communicate any questions or concerns they may have about workplace hazards. Supervisors, or others who will be involved in training new workers, should be familiar with some of the unique health and safety concerns faced by new and young workers.

Employers should provide workplace-specific training to all workers and should focus on:

- Newly hired workers with or without experience in the industry
- Existing workers starting a new job, being transferred or returning after an extended absence
- Workers who will benefit from retraining after an incident in which they are injured or narrowly escape injury
- Workers who will be working on new or different work processes or with new machinery
- Seasonal help
- Student workers and co-op students
- Temporary workers who may or may not have experience in the industry
- Vulnerable workers

Further information on new and young worker safety:

- Young worker portal on the Ministry of Labour's website:
www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/atwork/youngworkers.php
- Young worker safety tips:
http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/yw/yw_tips_youngworkers.php
- Parenting young workers:
http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/yw/yw_tips_parents.php
- Supervising young workers:
http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/yw/yw_tips_supervisors.php
- Young worker safety poster:
http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/yw/yw_poster.php
- *WorkSmartOntario*:
<http://www.worksmartontario.gov.on.ca>
- *WorkSmartOntario*: Minimum Age Requirement Information:
<http://www.worksmartontario.gov.on.ca/scripts/default.asp?contentID=2-2-4&mcategory=health>
- Workplace Safety & Insurance Board young workers' resources:
<http://www.ywap.ca>
- *WorkSmartCampus*:
<http://www.worksmartcampus.ca>
- Institute for Work & Health – Vulnerable workers:
<http://www.iwh.on.ca/vulnerable-workers>
- Podcast:
<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/podcasts/archive.php>
- Workers Health & Safety Centre:
<http://www.whsc.on.ca/>

Toll-Free Number

Call 1-877-202-0008 any time to report critical injuries, fatalities or work refusals. Call 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday for general inquiries about workplace health and safety. **Always call 911** in an emergency.

Note: This fact sheet has been prepared to help workplace parties understand some of their obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and regulations. It is not legal advice. It is not intended to replace the OHSA or the regulations. For more information, see http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/hs_disclaimer.php