

READY FOR WORK

Module 3. Safety Works: Occupational Health & Safety



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Safety Works: Occupational Health & Safety for Young Workers

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Introduction to Safety Works

Young people will make an easier transition to the workplace if they are prepared for it. Young people need to know their rights and responsibilities for a healthy and safe workplace. This knowledge and the ability to act upon it constitute an important employability skill.

Young workers are at a significantly higher risk of injury than older or experienced workers. In fact, studies have found that workers under the age of 25 are 33 per cent more likely to suffer a job-related injury or illness than an older worker.¹

For young workers, this is a time of inexperience and uncertainty, a time of feeling powerless about your situation, hesitant about questioning authority and pressured to work quickly to keep up with more experienced workers for fear of being let go. With this lack of experience generally comes less ability to recognize hazardous situations, and an unfamiliarity of the importance of adhering to policies and procedures in place for their own protection.

It is not just young workers getting hurt. Starting a new job can be risky for workers of any age, including experienced workers. Young or old, new workers may not be aware of the hazards in their new workplace. They may feel pressured to work quickly to keep up with experienced workers or to adapt to their new work environment with little guidance.

The goal of this module is to help students develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to have positive initial and continuing work experiences. *Safety Works: Occupational Health and Safety for Young Workers* focuses on *Part III of The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (the act), *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, 1996* (the regulations) and the role this legislation plays in creating and maintaining safe working conditions. This law has significance for young workers, as most youth are likely to have jobs in businesses that come under the jurisdiction of this provincial law.

This module also gives young workers the opportunity to develop the skills they need to recognize and manage hazards in the workplace. It will help them learn appropriate health and safety questions to ask to protect themselves when entering the workplace.

¹ Occupational Health and Safety Insider, April 15, 2015

Module Description

Safety Works: Occupational Health and Safety for Young Workers is a six-hour module that provides teachers with learning objectives, learning activities, evaluation tools and resource lists. Approximate time frames are provided for each learning activity. Teachers will need to choose or adapt activities to fit their school's timetable and their course.

The module can be used as a separate unit of instruction or specific learning activities can be integrated within existing unit and course plans. The module can be used in a number of secondary level courses, but has specific relevance for courses with a transition-to-work dimension.

As an alternative to using all the activities in the module, we recommend a one-hour *Are You Ready for Work? An Occupational Health and Safety Presentation for Young Workers* (Refer to *Activity 2: Overview of Occupational Health and Safety*). Teachers can invite a speaker to deliver the presentation or deliver it themselves.

This module addresses the following key concepts:

1. Entry-level workers are better prepared for the workplace if they know about healthy and safe workplace practices.
2. Everyone in the workplace has responsibility for health and safety, to act and work safely on the job. However, the employer is ultimately responsible and accountable for health and safety.
3. Workers have three basic rights:
 - The **Right to Know** about workplace hazards and how to deal with them
 - The **Right to Participate** in health and safety activities in the workplace
 - The **Right to Refuse** work that the worker believes is unusually dangerous
4. Employer and worker rights and responsibilities are described in provincial legislation.
5. The act and regulations set minimum standards for health and safety in most Saskatchewan workplaces.

These concepts are considered essential as students enter the workforce. Many new workers will become supervisors and employers. Knowledge of health and safety practices and a positive attitude toward them will be of continuing value.

Objectives

Foundational objectives

- To develop an awareness of rights and responsibilities with respect to safe workplace practices and procedures
- To introduce students to provincial legislation governing workplace health and safety
- To identify and explain health and safety hazards in the workplace so that the potential for personal injury is minimized
- To develop skills, knowledge and attitudes students need in order to act on safety knowledge

Learning objectives

- Describe the impact of unsafe work practices and the effect on peoples' lives (Activity 1)
- Develop an understanding of rights and responsibilities regarding healthy, safe workplace practices (Activity 2)
- List safety resources and contacts in the workplace and the community (Activity 2)
- Explain the purpose of the act and regulations and how they affect workplace practices (Activity 3)
- Understand the rights (to know, to participate, to refuse) and responsibilities of workers (Activities 4, 5, 6)
- Explain the role and responsibilities of Occupational Health Committees (OHCs) (Activity 4)
- Evaluate hazardous situations to determine how to respond (Activity 5)
- Describe the steps in a refusal to work situation (Activity 6)
- Identify health and safety questions to discuss with employers (Activity 7)

Resource List

Module resources

1. *An Occupational Health and Safety Presentation for Young Workers* (PowerPoint with guide available at www.worksafesask.ca) or book a speaker from Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

Phone: 306.525.0197

Email: sfl@sfl.sk.ca

2. *Don't Risk Your Life* (video available at <https://rover.edonline.sk.ca/>)
3. *Guide for New Workers*
Download from: www.worksafesask.ca
4. *Tips for Young Workers*
Download from: www.worksafesask.ca
5. *Ready for Work* q-cards
Download from: www.worksafesask.ca
6. *The Saskatchewan Employment Act and The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996*
Download from: www.publications.gov.sk.ca

Additional resources

1. Websites: www.saskatchewan.ca and www.worksafesask.ca
2. Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course (www.ywrcc.saskatchewan.ca)
3. Related modules:
 - *Module 5: An Introduction to Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) 2015*
 - *Module 6: Recognizing Hazards and hazard supplements* (e.g., construction, electrical)

Course Outline

Time frame: 5.5 - 6 hours

What you will learn

- Why it is important to work safely on the job
- Who is responsible for health and safety in your workplace
- What health and safety rights and responsibilities workers have in the workplace
- How to recognize hazards and take steps to protect yourself and others in the workplace
- What to do if you are asked to do work that you believe is unusually dangerous
- Where to get help if you have health and safety concerns

Course map

Content	Instructional techniques/ strategies	Purpose	Time frame
Activity 1: What Safety Means to Me	Ice breaker activity Video: <i>Don't Risk Your Life</i>	Introduces the concept of working safely on the job; identifies course content, time lines and evaluation processes	45 min.
Activity 2: Overview of Occupational Health & Safety	Activity: Occupational Health & Safety Presentation	Identifies worker rights and responsibilities regarding healthy and safe workplace practices	60 min.
	Discussion questions	Explains the purpose of <i>The Saskatchewan Employment Act</i>	30 min.
Activity 3: How are workers protected?	<i>History and Purpose of Health and Safety Legislation</i> (lecturette) Activity: Where would you find ...?	Introduces a process for workers to identify and deal with hazards in the workplace	45 min.

<p>Activity 4: Workers' Rights & Responsibilities - The Right to Participate</p>	<p>Review rights and responsibilities (lecturette)</p> <p>Activity: <i>How do I participate in health and safety in the workplace?</i></p>	<p>Identifies how workers can participate in keeping their workplace healthy and safe</p>	<p>45 min.</p>
<p>Activity 5: Workers' Rights & Responsibilities - The Right to Know</p>	<p>Video: <i>Don't Risk Your Life</i></p> <p>Types of Hazards (lecturette)</p> <p>Activity: <i>Identifying Hazards in the Workplace</i></p>	<p>Explains the process for workers to use to refuse work they consider to be unusually dangerous</p>	<p>45 min.</p>
<p>Activity 6: Workers' Rights & Responsibilities – The Right to Refuse</p>	<p>Lecturette</p> <p>Role plays</p>	<p>Provides an opportunity to apply what you've learned to a workplace setting</p>	<p>30 min.</p>
<p>Activity 7: Using Your Knowledge in the Workplace</p>	<p>Activity: <i>Questions to Ask Your Employer</i></p> <p>Pamphlets and handouts</p>		<p>45 min.</p>
<p>Feedback on module</p>	<p>Student and teacher feedback sheets</p>		<p>10 min.</p>

Evaluation

1. You will have a final test, project or essay (to be discussed with the class).
2. You will receive question sheets that you will complete and hand in to be marked.
3. Your participation, co-operation and attitude during class will also count.

Learning Activities

Activity 1: What Safety Means to Me

Learning objectives

- To describe the impact of unsafe work practices and the effect on people's lives

Materials and equipment

- Background notes
- Video: *Don't Risk Your Life*
- *Handout 1: What Safety Means to Me* and *Handout 2: Safety Works Flashcards*
- *Tips for Young Workers* fact sheet

Time: 45 minutes

Activity

1. Discuss the purpose of the activity. Explain that the students will complete a question sheet, discuss their answers and watch a video. Remind students that the question sheet will be handed in.
2. Hand out the question sheet, *Handout 1: What Safety Means to Me*. Give students about **10 minutes** to complete part 1.
3. Discuss students' answers to part 1 using some or all of the following questions:
 - What are some of the activities you like to do?
 - Were you surprised by how many of the activities you do on your own or with others, the ones you like to do most or least, and how often in the past month you have done the ones you like most or least?
 - How do you think your ability to do these activities would be affected by a workplace incident?
4. Give students about **10 minutes** to complete part 2.
5. Show the video, *Don't Risk Your Life*.
6. Discuss students' answers to part 2 using some or all of the following questions:
 - How were the families of the young people in the video affected? How do you think your family and friends, the people in the first circle of influence, might be affected?
 - How do you think the rest of society, your acquaintances and the people on the fringe of your life, might be affected by your injury?

7. Using information from the **fact sheet** and the **teacher resources** section, discuss the following with the students:
 - Reasons young workers experience higher rates of injury than other workers (Brainstorm possible reasons with your class. Refer to the **teacher resources** for Activity 1 for additional ideas)
 - How learning about safety can prevent injuries and fatalities
 - The purpose, content and format of this module
8. Provide students with copies of the *Tips for Young Workers* fact sheet and the course outline.
9. Ask students to complete and hand in part 3 of *Handout 1: What Safety Means to Me*.

Additional or alternative activities

1. As an alternative to *Handout 1: What Safety Means to Me*, use *Handout 2: Safety Works Flashcards* to introduce students to the concept of safety, the reasons for learning more about it and the course outline.
2. As an alternative to writing about *Handout 1: What Safety Means to Me*, students could create collages, concept maps, or role plays.

Evaluation

1. Informally assess students as they participate in the group discussion. Are their contributions thoughtful, contextual and well-reasoned?
2. Were the students willing to participate and share answers?
3. Responses on *Handout 1: What Safety Means to Me* should illustrate a clear understanding of the physical, mental, emotional and financial cost of unsafe work practices for themselves, their family, their friends and society as whole.

Background notes

Injury rates for young workers

The reasons for high injury rates are complex. Some contributing factors are:

- The nature of the tasks and the work young people are hired to do can lead to injury.
- A lack of appropriate training and supervision – In part-time jobs, young workers may not always get top priority for training or for an orientation to safe work practices. For this reason, many young workers are unaware of safe work practices and the risks associated with their new jobs.
- New entrants to the workforce have limited on-the-job experience. They are also inexperienced in recognizing potential workplace hazards.
- Young workers may think they are invincible because they are young and healthy. They think incidents happen to other people, not to them. They may also have the perception that adults or authority figures are “looking out for them.”
- Young workers may be reluctant to ask questions or to “rock the boat.” They want to fit in at work and show that they can do the job.
- Young workers lack an awareness and/or knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as workers.

Graphs

Four graphs are provided on the following pages. They may be used for teacher reference only or discussed with the class.

1. *Showing Young Workers the Safe Way to Work Reduces Injuries*

2. *Informing Young Workers about Hazards Reduces Workplace Injuries*

These two graphs are based on a survey of over 1,800 young people (15–24 years old) in Saskatchewan.

The first graph illustrates the reduction in workplace injuries when young workers are shown the safe way to do their jobs. In particular, injury rates were significantly reduced for young males and workers in high-risk industries (e.g., manufacturing, construction, farming and primary production). Knowing how to do the job safely does make a difference.

The second graph illustrates that knowing about the hazards in the workplace and how to control them also reduces injuries.

3. *Industries with the Highest Number of Injury Claims*

The categories used in this graph are based on the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board classification system. Examples of workplaces in each classification are provided.

Agriculture – for example, farming, nurseries (tree or shrub), trapping, market gardening, ranching, dairy farming, vegetation control, mosquito and tree spraying, fertilizer and chemical application

Building construction – for example, framing, plumbing and heating repair, electric work, sheet metal work, installation of antennas and satellite dishes, on-site cabinet making, painting, and window cleaning

Commodity – Wholesale – Retail – for example, clothing stores, retail drugs and pharmacies, theatre, book stores, grocery, department, hardware stores, co-operative associations, lumber yards, auto and farm implement dealerships, car washing and glamourizing, gas bar attendants, lube shops, muffler shops, and towing

Development – Mineral Resources – for example, mining, operation of oil wells, oil well servicing, drilling, prospecting, underground mining, diamond drilling

Forestry – for example, logging, log/pulpwood hauling, pulp and paper mills

Government and Municipal – for example, universities and regional colleges, school divisions, hospitals, care homes, cities, towns, villages, Government of Saskatchewan and departments

Manufacturing and Processing – for example, manufacturing, pipeline operations, refineries and upgrader, dairy products, soft drinks, bakeries, food preparation and packaging, mills, meat processing, iron and steel processing, agricultural equipment, machine shops, iron and steel fabrication

Road Construction – for example, roadwork, excavating, gravel work, landscaping, tree trimming, railway construction, irrigation work, trenching, snow removal, pipeline construction, land clearing, demolition, subcontract labour

Service Industry – for example, legal offices, drafting, employment services, associations, unions, medical offices, dental offices, photography studios, film production, real estate, travel agencies, hairdressing, tanning salons, hostels, animal clinics, house sitters, restaurants, licensed lounges, coffee houses, hotels, camps, resorts, outfitters, computer cleaning, service clubs, spas, fitness centres, park maintenance

Transportation, Warehousing – for example, inter-provincial trucking, mail hauling, household movers, grain hauling, messenger and courier services, soft drink distribution, cold storage, garbage collecting, commercial air transportation, pilot training flying, operation of helicopters, aerial crop spraying, water bombing, subcontract labour

Utility Operations – for example, telecommunications, electric systems

4. *Breakdown of Top Causes of Injuries for Young Workers (age 15 – 24) in 2015*

The most common type of incident is coming in contact with objects. This includes injuries occurring because of bumping into or stepping on objects, being struck, crushed or pinned by a falling object, and being pushed or thrown into an object.

Bodily reaction and exertion injuries are those caused by excessive physical effort or repetition of a motion.

Handout 1: What Safety Means to Me

Part 1

1. In the spaces below, list six to eight things you like to do. For example, you might like to play basketball with your friends, watch videos, hang out at the mall or read.
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
2. Number the activities listed above in order of how much you like them. Put a number 1 beside your favorite activity, number 2 beside your second favorite and so on.
3. Put an **A** beside those you like to do alone and an **O** beside those that involve other people.
4. Put a check mark (✓) beside those you have done in the last two days, an **X** beside those you have done in the past week and a star (*) beside those you haven't done in the past month.
5. Think about the worst incident you can imagine happening to you. This would be an incident in which your injury would be severe enough to hospitalize you for a period of time. In the space below, jot down what your injuries might be (e.g., a broken leg, burns, disfigurement, or loss of fingers or arms).
6. Think about how your life would be affected. Draw a line through those activities in number 1 that you would not be able to do. Put an **L** beside those you could do in a limited way.

7. In the space below, write down:

a) How you think you would feel

b) What you might be thinking

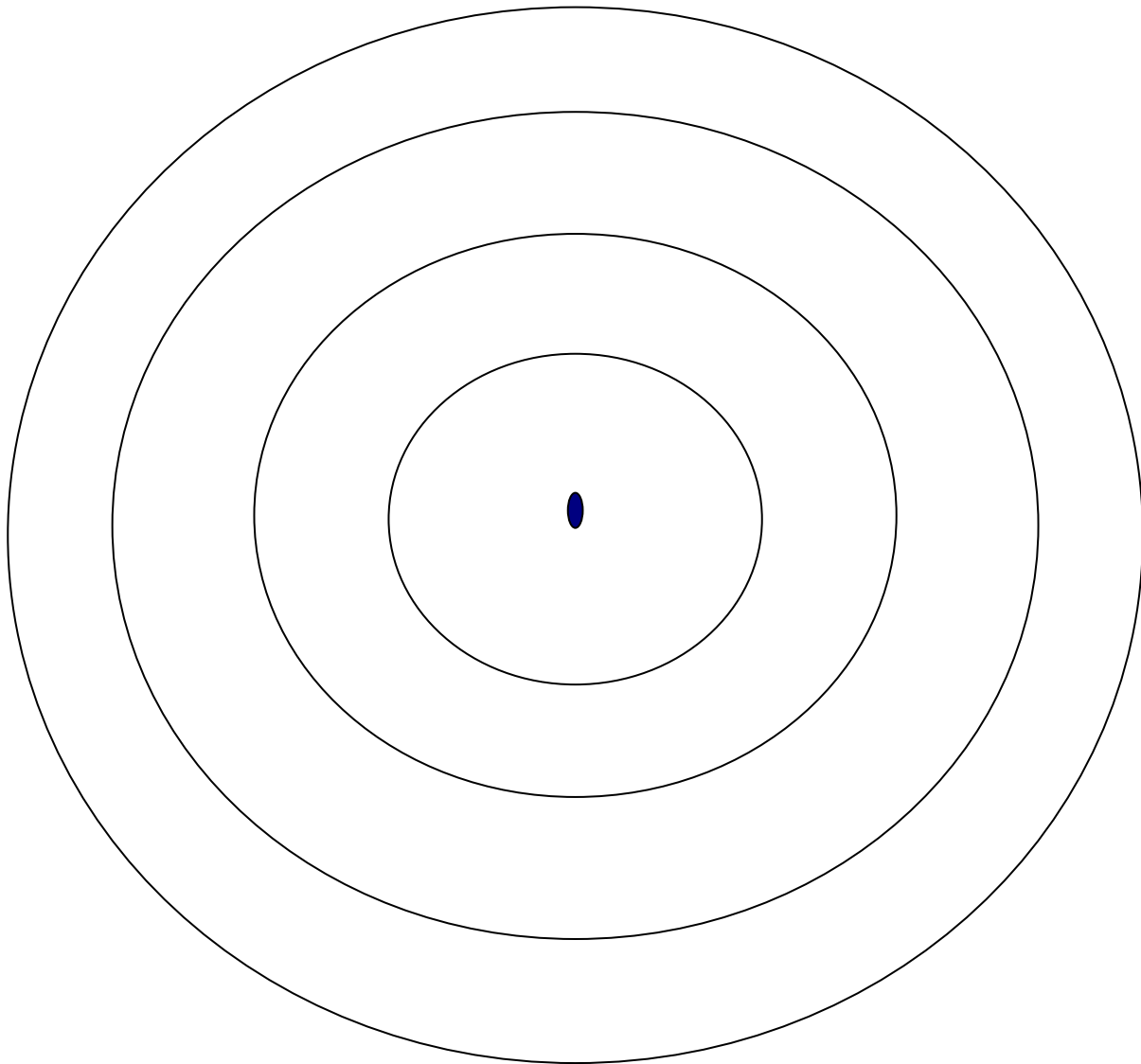
c) How you think others might feel or think about you

Part 3

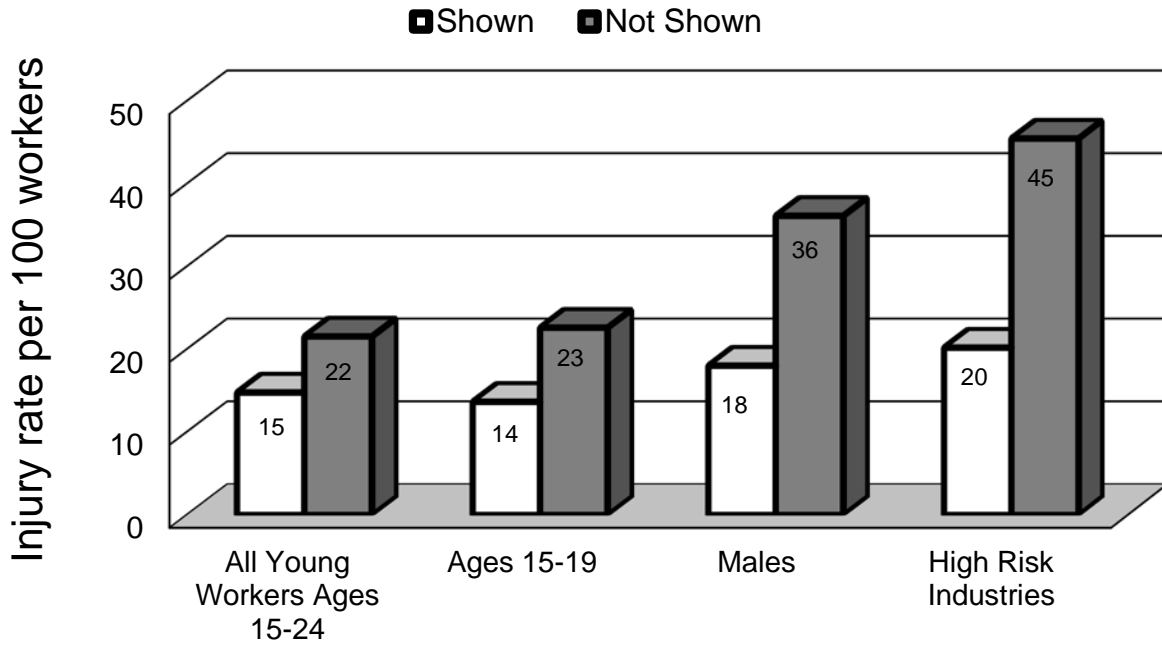
Complete the following:

“It is important to be safe at work because . . .

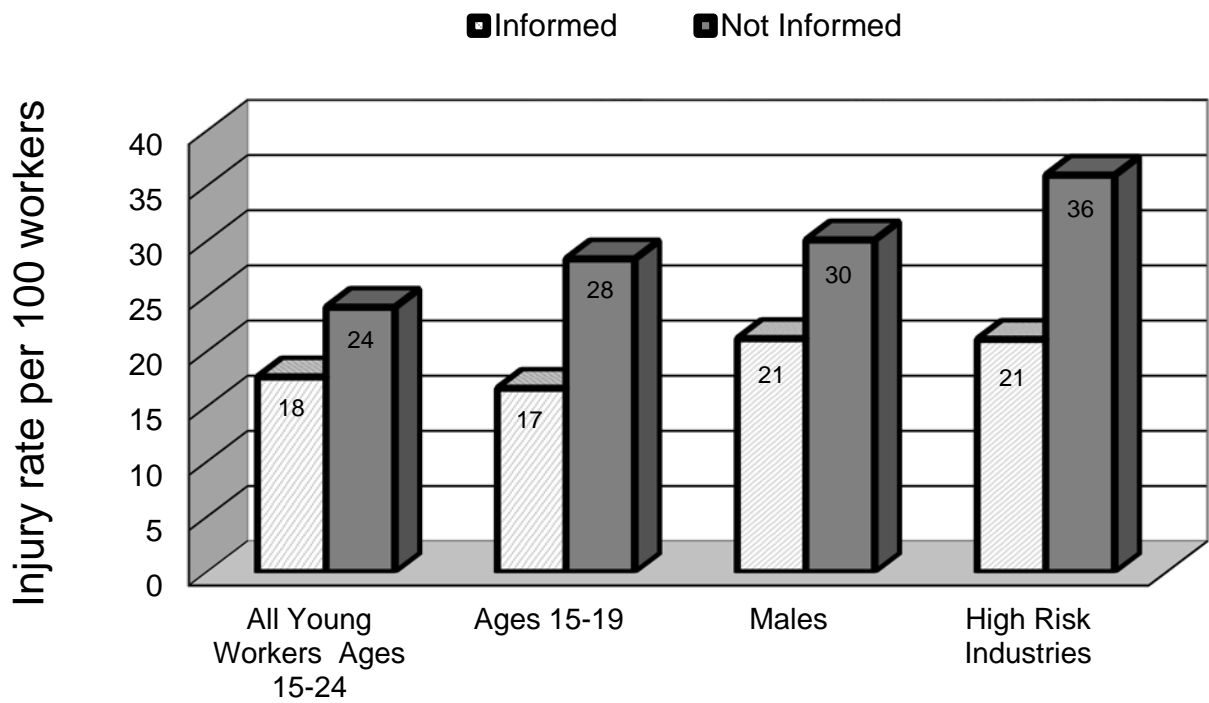
Circles of Influence



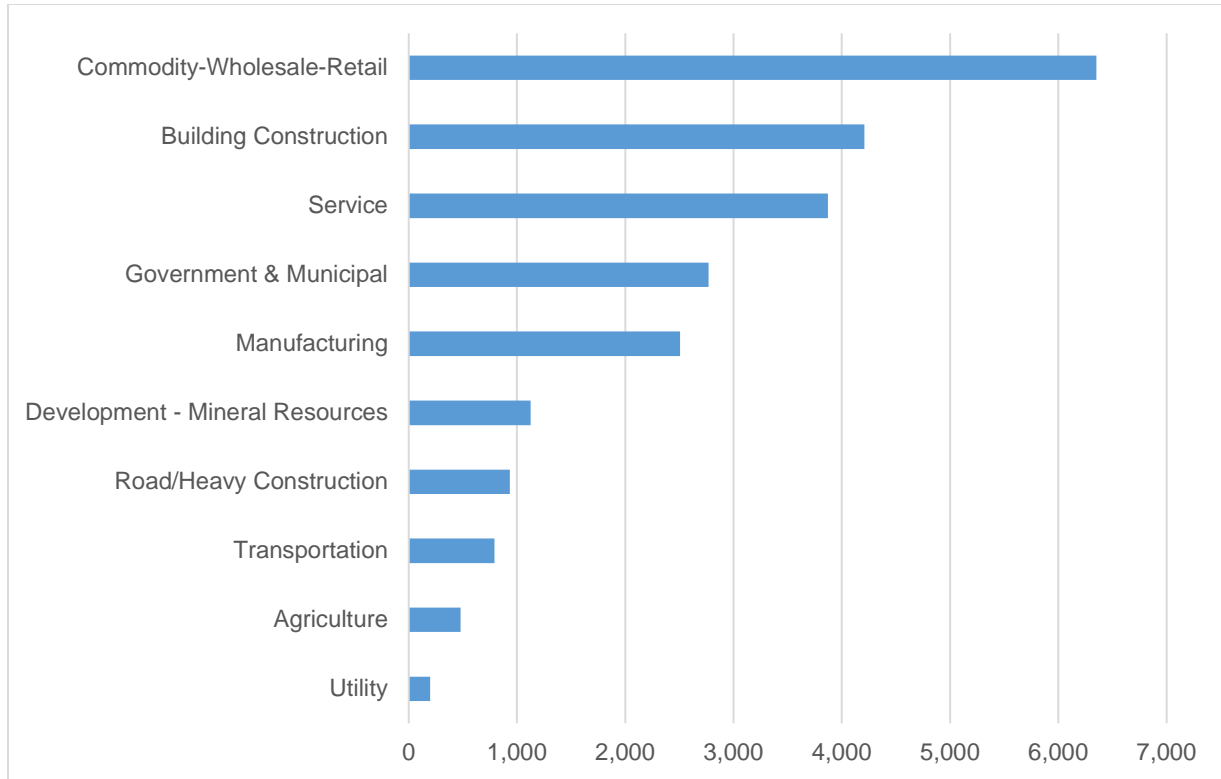
Showing Young Workers the Safe Way to Work Reduces Workplace Injuries



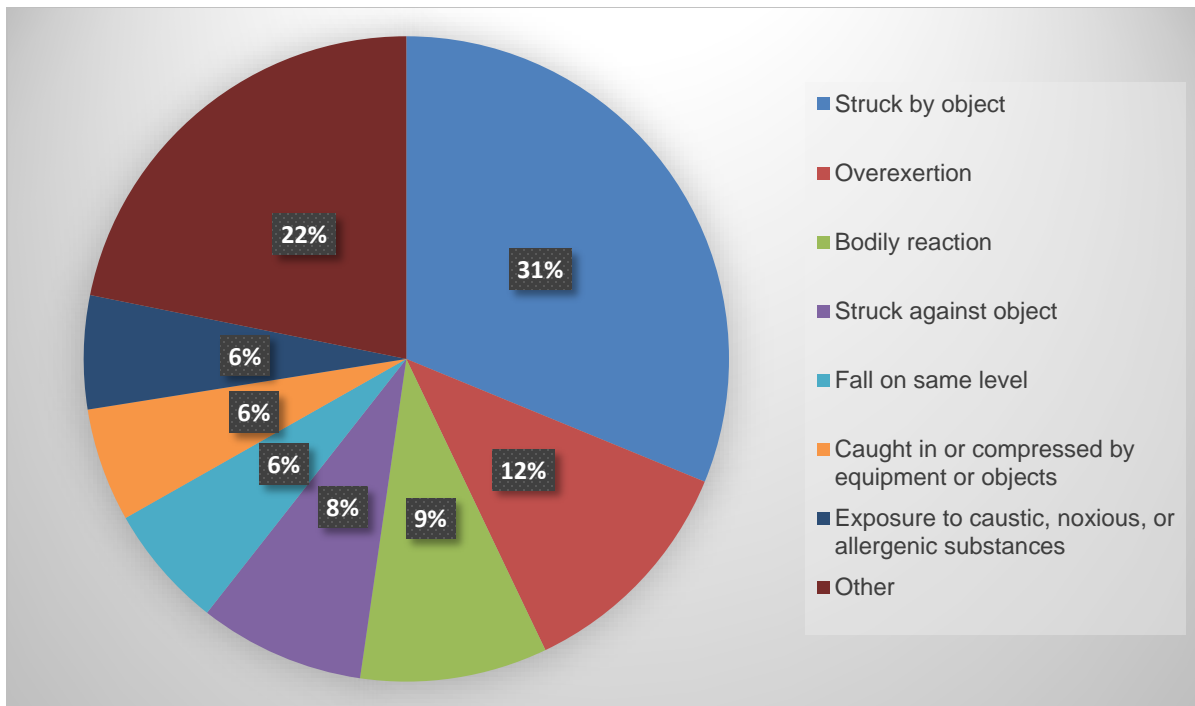
Informing Young Workers About Hazards Reduces Workplace Injuries



Industries with the Highest Accepted Injury Claims for Young Workers (age 15 to 24) from 2013 to 2017



Breakdown of Top Causes of Injuries for Young Workers (age 15 – 24) in 2015



Handout 2: Safety Works Flashcards

Instructions

1. Discuss the purpose of the activity. Explain that it will involve playing a “safety Trivial Pursuit game” and discussing the significance of being safe at work.
2. Create file cards using the questions and answers from the *Safety Works Flashcards* question sheet.
3. Ask students to randomly pick a card from those available.
4. Ask students to read their questions aloud to the group. With the class, discuss possible answers and the reasons for the answers. Ask for the answer on the back of the card to be read aloud. Allow about **15 - 20 minutes** for the questions.

or

Divide students into teams with two to four members. Pair teams. Provide each group with five to 10 question cards. Have each team take turns asking each other the questions on their cards and then providing the answers. For each correct answer, a team scores **two points**. Provide about **15 - 20 minutes** to play the game.

5. Debrief the activity by asking each group to:
 - Share one question the group did not know the answer to.
 - Share one question on which the group disagreed about the answer.
 - Share one question where the answer surprised them.
 - Identify at least one thing they learned about safety that they didn't know before.

Notes on harassment:

Questions on harassment – Make sure the students understand the definition of harassment under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

"Harassment" means any inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action or gesture by a person that constitutes a threat to the health or safety of a worker. Harassment falls into two categories.

1. Harassment based on race, creed, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin.
2. Harassment that adversely affects the worker's psychological or physical well-being, and that the person who perpetrates the harassment knows or ought reasonably to know would cause a worker to be humiliated or intimidated. This does not include

any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of the employer's workers or the place of employment. Under this category the harassment must involve **repeated conduct**, OR involve **a single, serious occurrence** that causes a lasting harmful effect.

3. Form small groups. Ask students to discuss the following questions, record their ideas and appoint a member of their group to report back to the larger group. Allow about **five to seven minutes** for discussion. Ask each group to share their answers with the large group.
 - Why do you think it is important to work safely and to know your rights and responsibilities regarding safe workplace practices?
 - If you were injured on the job, who might be affected and how would they be affected?
 - Do you know anyone who has had a workplace injury?
4. Using information from the *Guide for New Workers* and the introduction to this module, discuss with students:
 - The financial and humanitarian cost to society and loved ones of injuries and deaths on the job
 - The reasons why young workers experience higher rates of injury than other workers
 - How learning about safety can prevent injuries and fatalities
 - The purpose, content and format of this module
5. Provide students with copies of the *Tips for Young Workers* fact sheet and the course outline.

Safety Works Flashcards

Question sheet

(Teacher's copy)

As a worker, which of these rights for safety do you have in the workplace?

- a) The right to know the hazards at work and how to control them
- b) The right to participate in finding and controlling hazards in the workplace
- c) The right to refuse work you consider unusually dangerous to yourself and others
- d) All of the above

Answer: (d) All of the above. You have the right to know what hazards exist in the workplace and how to control them, the right to participate in finding and controlling the hazards and the right to refuse work you consider unusually dangerous.

As a worker, you have the right to refuse work that you consider to be unusually dangerous.

- a) True b) False

Answer: (b) True. You have the right to refuse work you consider unusually dangerous to yourself and to others in the workplace.

You are only responsible for your own safety in the workplace.

- a) True b) False

Answer: b) False. You are responsible for ensuring your own safety and the safety of your co-workers.

You are responsible for not starting or becoming involved in harassment in the workplace.

a) True b) False

Answer: a) True. You should not start or become involved in harassment in the workplace.

You are a glass cutter and your employer has given you a pair of safety gloves to use. You don't like them because they make it hard to use your tools. You would prefer not to wear them. Do you have to co-operate with your employer?

a) Yes b) No

Answer: a) Yes. It is your responsibility to co-operate with your employer by wearing the personal protective equipment required on the job.

You should be more concerned about your safety rights than your responsibilities for safety in the workplace.

a) True b) False

Answer: b) False. You need to be as concerned about your responsibilities for safety in the workplace as you are about your rights.

You observe co-workers doing a job in a way that could result in harm or injury. What do you do?

- a) Ignore them
- b) Inform the supervisor
- c) Inform the workers that what they are doing is unsafe
- d) Run for cover

Answer: c) Inform the workers that what they are doing is unsafe. You are responsible for ensuring your own safety and the safety of your co-workers. If you, as a young worker, feel uncertain about what to do, inform your supervisor.

The Saskatchewan law that protects the health and safety of workers in the workplace is:

- a) *The Human Rights Code*
- b) *The Animal Rights Act*
- c) *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*
- d) *The Worker's Compensation Act*

Answer: c) *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* protects the health and safety of workers in the workplace.

As a young worker (15–24 years old), you are most likely to be injured at the job:

- a) During the first three months
- b) During the first year
- c) At the same rate as older workers

Answer: a) During the first three months. New workers are inexperienced. They have no on-the-job experience and little training in how to recognize and control hazards in the workplace. They are also eager to please and less likely to refuse work they consider unusually dangerous or to ask for the appropriate training they might need.

Young workers under 19 years of age are at greater risk for injury from:

- a) Coming in contact with objects
- b) Over-exertion
- c) Exposure to harmful substances
- d) All of the above

Answer: d) All of the above. For workers under 19 years old, about five in 10 incidents are caused by coming in contact with objects, about two in 10 incidents are caused by over-exertion, and about one in 10 incidents are caused by exposure to harmful substances.

You walk into a room where a group of people are teasing a co-worker about his heavy accent. You suddenly remember a really funny joke you know that poked fun at the nationality of the co-worker, and you tell the joke. Which one of your responsibilities are you failing to carry out?

Answer: To not start or become involved in harassment. Under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, you have the responsibility to refrain from starting or becoming involved in the harassment of another worker based on a number of factors including nationality.

As a new worker, you have the right to be informed of:

- a) The chemicals being used in your workplace
- b) Procedures for handling the chemicals safely
- c) The personal protective equipment (PPE) you need to protect yourself when using the chemicals
- d) All of the above

Answer: d) All of the above.

As a young worker (15–24 years old), you are more likely to injure your:

- a) Head
- b) Hands
- c) Torso
- d) All of the above

Answer: d) All of the above. Injuries for young workers occur to the head, hands and torso.

A worker feels he is being harassed because a group of co-workers is teasing him about his weight, which he finds offensive and humiliating. Other workers don't feel there is a problem, as this group of workers is known to tease everyone. Is this harassment?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Answer: a) Yes. Harassment means any objectionable conduct, comment or display by a person that is directed at a worker and is made on a number of factors, including weight.

A young woman is being constantly harassed at work. She is afraid to say anything about it because she is worried that she will lose her job. Does she need to worry about losing her job if she files a harassment complaint?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Answer: b) No. *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* protects the worker from being discriminated against from losing her job.

What is the most important reason for dealing with harassment in the workplace?

Answer: Harassment affects the health and safety of everyone in the workplace.

All new workers must be oriented to the hazards that exist in workplace and how to control them.

a) True b) False

Answer: a) True. Employers have the responsibility to ensure workers are trained before they start work in all matters necessary to protect their health and safety, including what hazards exist in the workplace.

The saying “every worker is his brother’s keeper” applies to safety in the workplace.

a) True b) False

Answer: a) True. Workers are responsible for ensuring their own safety and the safety of their co-workers.

A new worker finds himself to be by far the youngest person on the job. Whenever he asks how something needs to be done, he finds his co-workers always say things like, “I guess a little kid like you wouldn’t know how to do this.” He feels that he is only trying to learn his job and these comments are starting to really bother him. Is this harassment?

a) Yes b) No

Answer: a) Yes. Harassment means any objectionable conduct, comment or display by a person that is directed at a worker, and made on the basis of a number of factors, including age.

The employer is ultimately responsible for keeping the workplace free from harassment.

- a) True b) False

Answer: a) True. The employer bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the workplace is free from harassment.

Which of these workplaces would be required by law to have a violence policy?

- a) Hospitals
- b) Schools
- c) Convenience stores
- d) All of the above

Answer: d) All of the above. Any workplaces with a greater than average risk of violence to their workers must have a policy on how to handle violent situations.

On a regular basis, my boss asks me to lift a box that weighs more than 30 kilograms (66 pounds). I think there is a law that says I can only be asked to lift boxes under 22 kilograms. Who is right: my boss or me?

Answer: The boss. *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* do not limit the weight a worker can lift in the workplace. However, the regulations do state that no worker should engage in manual lifting, holding, or transporting that, by reason of weight, size, shape, or any combination of these is likely to injure the worker.

My employer has to provide me with drinking water while at work.

- a) True b) False

Answer: a) True. An employer must provide clean, safe drinking water that is readily accessible.

How can you participate in health and safety in the workplace?

- a) As a member of the Occupational Health Committee
b) As a safety representative
c) By reporting unsafe conditions or equipment to the supervisor
d) All of the above

Answer: d) All of the above. As a worker, you have the right to participate in a formal role (as a committee member or a safety representative). However, every worker has the responsibility to participate in health and safety in the workplace by reporting unsafe conditions.

Every workplace has to have an Occupational Health Committee.

- a) True b) False

Answer: a) False. Occupational Health Committees are only required in workplaces with 10 or more workers. Safety representatives are required in high hazard industries with five to nine workers. Employers must talk directly to workers in workplaces where committees and representatives are not required.

What are Occupational Health Committees and safety representatives responsible for in the workplace?

- a) Participating in the identification and control of hazards
- b) Helping identify and resolve the safety concerns of workers
- c) Inspecting the workplace regularly
- d) Investigating incidents and dangerous occurrences
- e) All of the above

Answer: e) All of the above. Occupational Health Committees (OHCs) and occupational health representatives help employers improve health and safety in the workplace. It is the employer's responsibility to decide what actions to take to reduce hazards in the workplace.

OHCs and safety representatives share most of the same responsibilities. OHCs can investigate incidents and dangerous occurrences independently. Safety representatives, however, do so with the employer. Also, safety representatives do not investigate "refusals to work," but OHCs do carry out this kind of investigation. OHCs have responsibilities in addition to those stated above.

Activity 2: Overview of Occupational Health & Safety

Learning objectives

- To develop an understanding of rights and responsibilities regarding healthy and safe workplace practices
- To list safety resources and contacts in the workplace and the community

Materials and equipment

- *An Occupational Health and Safety Presentation for Young Workers*
- Background notes
- *Handout 3-5: Discussion Questions (Parts 1, 2 and 3)*
- PowerPoint presentation, laptop, LCD projector and screen

Time: 60 - 90 minutes

Activity

1. Prior to the speaker coming to your classroom, discuss with students the purpose of the presentation. (Refer to background notes in the teacher resources section.) Ask students to write down at least two questions they have about health and safety.
2. Following the presentation, ask students which of their questions have not been answered. Raise them with the presenter.
3. Tell students that the key concepts in the presentation will be explored in more detail in the remainder of the module.

Additional or alternative activities

1. If you are unable to book a speaker, you can access the presentation online. The presentation includes a presenter's guide, script, background information and student handouts.
2. You may choose to deliver the presentation in three segments with an opportunity for discussion between each segment:
 - Divide the class into small groups.
 - Give each group *Handout 3: Discussion Questions: Part 1*.
 - View slides for part 1 (slides 1-9). Provide about five minutes for the small groups to discuss the questions. Then ask groups to share their answers with the whole class.
 - Repeat this process for *Handout 4: Discussion Questions: Part 2* (slides 10-19) and *Handout 5: Discussion Questions: Part 3* (slides 20-27).

Evaluation

1. You will make an informal assessment of students as the groups answer the discussion questions.
2. Ask students to complete and hand in the following statements:

One thing I already knew about health and safety in the workplace was ...

One thing I learned today was ...

One message I will remember from this presentation is ...

One question I still have is ...

The information would have been more meaningful if ...

Background notes

An Occupational Health and Safety Presentation for Young Workers

Objectives

The presentation is a one-hour introduction to creating an awareness of health and safety issues in the workplace.

Specifically, it will help students to:

- Develop an awareness of overall workplace health and safety issues
- Develop an awareness of job hazards
- Develop an awareness about the three basic rights – to know, to participate, and to refuse
- Understand young workers' responsibilities for keeping themselves and others safe on the job
- Ask key questions about job hazards and safety gear (personal protective equipment (PPE)) requirements
- Ask key questions about job safety training and procedures
- Know who to ask about health and safety concerns

Handout 3: Discussion Questions: Part 1

(Teacher's copy)

(Slides 1-9)

1. About how many young workers are injured each year in Saskatchewan?

On average, three young workers die each year on the job and nearly 6,000 young workers are injured each year. These are **reported** injuries only, not all injuries that occur.

2. What are the most common types of injuries?

Most commonly, young workers' injuries occur to the hands, torso and head.

3. What industries have the most number of claims? Why do you think the injury rate is high in these industries?

- *The **service industry** (for example, hotels, restaurants, fitness centres, park maintenance, animal clinics)*
- **Manufacturing and processing** (for example, bakeries, food preparation and packaging, mills, meat processing, agricultural equipment)
- **Commodity-wholesale-retail** (for example, clothing stores, theatre, book stores, grocery, department, hardware stores, lumber yards, gas bar attendants)
- **Building construction** (for example, roadwork, excavating, gravel work, landscaping, tree trimming, irrigation work, trenching, snow removal)

A high percentage of youth work in the service, manufacturing and processing as well as the commodity-wholesale-retail industries. Due to the part-time nature of a number of jobs in these industries, training may be infrequent. The nature of the work in construction may lead to a higher number of injuries.

4. What can cause workplace incidents?

- Not knowing what the hazards are in the workplace and how to control them
- Inadequate training and supervision

5. What could the employer have done to prevent the incident to the kitchen worker? What could the worker have done?

Employer – Don't assume workers know the dangers in the workplace. Provide training to new workers. Thoroughly show the new worker how to do the job. Demonstrate a commitment to safe work practices and procedures.

Worker – Ask questions and request training. Follow any safety procedures outlined by the employer. Don't do a task unless you've been shown how to do it safely.

Handout 4: Discussion Questions: Part 2

(Slides 10-19)

1. What does harassment have to do with workplace health and safety?
2. Give examples of the two types of hazards that can cause injuries in the workplace.
3. What caused the incident with the conveyor belt?
4. What legislation protects your rights in the workplace?
5. What do you have the right to know about in your workplace?
6. What does the **Right to Participate** mean?
7. Under what conditions do you have the right to refuse work?

Handout 4: Discussion Questions: Part 2

(Teacher's copy)

(Slides 10-19)

1. What does harassment have to do with workplace health and safety?

Students' opinions should relate to the effect of harassment on the worker's health and well-being.

2. Give examples of the two types of hazards that can cause injuries in the workplace.

Physical hazards – lifting, tripping, falling, tools, machinery and equipment

Health hazards – hearing loss, repetitive strain injuries, exposure to heat, cold, radiation or chemicals, respiratory illness, stress

3. What caused the incident with the conveyor belt?

Encourage students to look beyond the incident itself. Answers should include immediate causes (i.e., worker reaching outside the safety zone) as well as root causes (i.e., employer not providing safe, well-maintained equipment or adequate training and orientation for workers).

4. What legislation protects your rights in the workplace?

The Saskatchewan Employment Act and The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996.

5. What do you have the right to know about in your workplace?

Workers have the **right to know** about hazards in the workplace and how to control them. Workers also have the **right to know** about safe work practices and procedures, what, if any, personal protective equipment (PPE) is required, and violence and harassment policies.

6. What does the Right to Participate mean?

You have the right to participate on an Occupational Health Committee or as a safety representative. If neither is required in your workplace, you have the right to discuss health and safety concerns directly with the employer. You have the right to be involved in identifying and reducing workplace hazards.

7. Under what conditions do you have the right to refuse work?

If you believe the job is unusually dangerous to yourself or others.

Handout 5: Discussion Questions: Part 3

(Teacher's copy)

(Slides 20-27)

1. Give two reasons why working on a farm can be dangerous.

Usually farms are not close to medical aid. You work around potentially dangerous chemicals and gases. You also work around dangerous equipment, which you may not have been trained to use safely. You may not know about the hazards.

2. What is the most common cause of death on farms?

Fifty per cent of deaths to people under the age of 20 were caused by farm machinery.

3. What are your responsibilities with respect to health and safety in the workplace?

- Ask for safety training and orientation
- Know the hazards in your workplace
- Follow safe work procedures and wear required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Use safety equipment correctly
- Report any hazards you see in the workplace
- Help the Occupational Health Committee or safety representative
- Ask questions
- Do not harass others in the workplace

4. What are some of the employer's responsibilities for health and safety in the workplace?

The employer has the most authority in the workplace, so has the greatest responsibility for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. Employers must ensure workers are not exposed to harassment, provide training, tools and equipment, provide competent supervisors, provide arrangements for emergencies, and establish Occupational Health Committees or appoint safety representatives.

5. Who would you talk to if you had concerns about health and safety at your job (or work placement)?

Work placement teacher, supervisor, Occupational Health Committee or safety representative, the Occupational Health and Safety division at the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Activity 3: How Are Workers Protected?

Learning objectives

- To explain the purpose of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* and how they affect workplace practices

Materials

- Background notes
- *Handout 6: Where would you find ...?*
- *Handout 7: Responsibilities of Employers, Supervisors and Workers*
- *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* (download from www.publications.gov.sk.ca)

Time: 45 minutes

Activity

1. Using the background notes, briefly explain the history and purpose of occupational health and safety legislation. Emphasize that everyone in the workplace has responsibilities for maintaining safety in the workplace.
2. Discuss the differences between *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996*.

Members of the legislature write the act, and it is the law. It contains general information pertaining to all workplaces.

The regulations contain specific standards so that safety can be implemented in a practical manner in the workplace. Regulations, for example, will state that stairs, including temporary stairs, need to be at least 600 millimetres wide and that portable ladders must be equipped with non-slip feet.

3. Show students a copy of the act and the regulations. Highlight the table of contents, its parts and section numbers, and where the appendix and index are located.
4. Divide the class into small groups. Distribute the act and regulations to the groups.
5. Tell students that the following activity will help them become familiar with using the act and regulations. They will need to use the index and table of contents to complete the activity.

6. Hand out the worksheet *Handout 6: Where would you find ...?* Do the first question with the whole group. Ask questions such as, how would you find the answer for this question, or where would you look first?

Write the answer on the board. The answer should include where the information was found (the act or the regulations), the part, the section and sub-section number.

7. Allow about **20 minutes** for students to complete the worksheet.
8. Discuss the answers with the class. Ask students to explain the steps they used to find the information.
9. Summarize key messages:
 - The legislation sets minimum standards for health and safety.
 - Everyone has a role to play in maintaining health and safety in the workplace (distribute *Handout 7: Responsibilities of Employers, Supervisors and Workers*).
 - The specific regulations a worker needs to be aware of will vary according to the work setting and job tasks (the employer needs to make a copy of the act available to workers and provide training on safety procedures specific to that workplace).

Additional activity

If students are in a practical and applied arts class, rewrite the questions to reflect regulations related to that class. For example, if students are in an auto body class, have them find information relating to ventilation, personal protective equipment or working with compressed air.

Evaluation

1. Observe the students during group activity.
2. Ask for student responses about the learning activity.

Background notes

How are workers protected?

Everyone has a responsibility

Everyone is responsible to work together to help prevent occupational injuries and illnesses. The responsibility for a healthy and safe workplace falls on every person in the workplace, to the degree that each person has the authority and ability to do so. Employers have the greatest control over the workplace and the legal responsibility for health and safety. Supervisors and workers have a duty to co-operate in controlling workplace hazards and protecting themselves and others.

The Saskatchewan Employment Act supports every worker's right to a safe and healthy workplace. It recognizes that only workers who are informed and empowered can fulfill their responsibilities. To this end, the act empowers workers with three rights – the right to know, to participate, and to refuse unusually dangerous work. The act protects worker rights by forbidding employers from disciplining workers who use their rights or carry out their responsibilities.

Taken together these parts are often called the Workplace Responsibility System (WRS) for occupational health and safety. The Occupational Health and Safety Division helps employers and workers keep their internal responsibility systems working properly.

Working together for health and safety

Getting people working together to identify and control hazards is the goal of a WRS. Its objective is to ensure that everyone integrates health and safety into their work. Occupational Health Committees (OHCs) and health and safety representatives help workers and employers communicate and work together to identify and control hazards.

The philosophy of workplace responsibility recognizes that employers have a legal and moral duty to provide a healthy and safe workplace. Worker participation is critical. Only through worker participation can hazards be properly identified and controlled.

The philosophy of workplace responsibility is based on the following concepts:

- **Personal responsibility** – Each person is responsible for integrating health and safety into his or her work.
- **Inclusiveness** – Everyone should be involved.
- **Co-operation** – Workers and employers must work together to identify and resolve health and safety problems.
- **Sharing of information** – Everyone has the right to receive the information they need to protect themselves from workplace hazards.

- **Accountability** – Everyone is accountable for carrying out their responsibilities.
- Occupational health and safety legislation**

Saskatchewan workplaces are governed by *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996*. The act and regulations specify the minimum standards for health and safety that apply to everyone in the workplace. Employers are required to have a copy of the act and regulations readily available to workers in the workplace.

Through their occupational health officers, the Occupational Health and Safety Division at the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety helps those in the workplace understand and fulfill their responsibilities.

Occupational health officers:

- Support OHCs and health and safety representatives in workplace
- Inspect workplaces
- Enforce health and safety requirements

OHS officers have the ability to:

- Stop work that involves a serious risk to workers
- Specify corrective actions and their completion dates
- Request a progress report

Handout 6: Where would you find ...?

1. The general duty of every worker not to participate in harassment
2. The definition of employer
3. The rules about hiring young people
4. The employer's responsibility to provide training to workers
5. Minimum requirements for Class A qualifications for first aid certification
6. Protections that need to be in place when a worker may fall

Handout 6: Where would you find . . . ?

(Teacher's copy)

1. The general duty of every worker not to participate in harassment

Act, 3-10(b)

2. The definition of employer

Act, 3-1(1)(j)

3. The rules about hiring young people

Regulations, 14

4. The employer's responsibility to provide training to workers

Regulations, 19

5. Minimum requirements for Class A qualifications for first aid certification

Appendix, Table 1

6. Protections that need to be in place when a worker may fall

Regulations, 116

Handout 7: Responsibilities of Employers, Supervisors and Workers

Employers	Supervisors	Workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a safe and healthy workplace • Establishing a committee or designating a representative as needed and ensuring the committee or representative is effective • Consulting and co-operating with the committee or representative • Providing the information and training needed to protect the health and safety of workers. • Ensuring that committee members or the representative obtain training in their duties • Ensuring that supervisors are competent and provide competent supervision • Arranging for the regular inspection of the workplace, tools and equipment to ensure safety • Ensuring that tools, machinery and equipment are properly maintained • Ensuring that workers are not exposed to harassment • Enabling the committee or representative to inspect the workplace regularly • Promptly correcting unsafe conditions and activities reported by the committee or representative • Ensuring that the committee or representative investigates reportable incidents and dangerous occurrences • Knowing and complying with health and safety requirements 	<p>Supervisors are workers and bear all the health and safety responsibilities assigned to workers. They are also agents of the employer and are often assigned significant responsibility for carrying out the employer's duties under the legislation.</p> <p>Supervisors have specific duties under the regulations for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that workers under their direction know and comply with health and safety requirements. • Ensuring that workers under their direction receive adequate supervision • Ensuring that workers know and follow health and safety requirements • Co-operating with the committee or representative • Knowing and complying with health and safety requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking reasonable care to protect their health and safety and that of other workers • Co-operating with employers, supervisors, committee members and representatives • Using safe work procedures, safeguards and personal protective equipment (PPE) • Reporting hazards (such as unsafe situations and activities) to the employer immediately • Refraining from harassment • Participating in training and health and safety meetings • Knowing and complying with health and safety requirements

Activity 4: Workers' Rights & Responsibilities - The Right to Know

Learning objectives

- To understand the rights (to know, to participate, to refuse) and responsibilities of workers
- To evaluate hazardous situations and determine how to respond

Materials

- Background notes
- Video: *Don't Risk Your Life*
- *Handout 8: Don't Risk Your Life Video Discussion Guide, Handout 9: Recognizing Hazards in the Workplace, Handout 10: A Hazard Control System, Handout 11: Training for New Workers*
- Occupational health and safety job situations (use your own job situations)

Time: 45 minutes

Activity

1. Review the meaning of the **Right to Know**. If necessary, remind students that they have a right to receive safety training, to know what hazards exist in the workplace and how to control them, and to learn safe work practices.
2. View the *Don't Risk Your Life* video. (In Saskatchewan, one in four injured workers is between the ages of 15 and 24.) Use the discussion questions as a guide to debriefing the video. Summarize by stating that identifying and controlling hazards can prevent many incidents.
3. Using the background notes, discuss the two major types of hazards: health hazards and safety hazards. Ask students what types of hazards were described in the video. Provide additional examples of both types of hazards.
4. Tell students that they have a role to play in affecting the outcome of a potentially hazardous workplace situation. Discuss the three steps in controlling a hazard: recognition (see it), evaluation (think it), and control (do it). Use the handout, *A Hazard Control System*.
5. Using one job situation picture as an example, go through the steps to evaluate and address hazardous work situations. Ask students:

What's the hazard (see it)? What's the risk or likelihood of an injury occurring?
How severe might the injuries be (think it)?
How can you deal with the hazard (do it)?

6. Divide class into small groups. Give each group *Handout 10: Recognizing Hazards in the Workplace* worksheet and a job situation picture. Allow about **15 minutes** to complete the activity. All groups present their situation to the class.
7. Hand out and discuss *Handout 11: Training for New Workers*, which summarizes employer responsibilities around workplace training and hazard control.

Additional or alternative activities

1. Hand out copies of *Handout 8: Don't Risk Your Life Video Discussion Guide* before viewing the video. Have students respond to the questions in small groups. Discuss the answers with the whole class.
2. Instead of providing pictures for *Handout 10: Recognizing Hazards in the Workplace*, ask if any students have part-time jobs. Ensure that one employed student is in each group. Ask employed students to list some of the tasks they have in that job (see it). Have the group brainstorm a list of potential hazards in that job (assess it) and ways to deal with the hazards (do it).

If there are not enough employed students in the class, assign each group a job such as retail salesperson, gas attendant, grocery store clerk, stock person, referee, construction worker, waiter/waitress, or short order cook. Provide a list of possible safety and health hazards if students have difficulty identifying potential hazards for the jobs.

3. With the consent of the employer and the student, take workplace pictures. Build a collection of workplace pictures relevant to your students and their community.

Interview employers to help identify hazards common to their workplace.

Have students design a safety checklist (for workplace inspection purposes) that would apply to each workplace situation.

4. For additional information on hazard identification, refer to *Ready for Work Module 6: Recognizing Hazards*.

Evaluation

1. Make informal observations during small group activity and assessment of answers in *Handout 10: Recognizing Hazards in the Workplace*.

Background notes

Identifying, assessing and controlling hazards

Workplace injuries and illness can be prevented if unsafe work practices are corrected and if workplace hazards are identified and dealt with. Every workplace, large or small, must have a system in place to identify hazards, assess the risk of those hazards, and carry out appropriate corrective action to control the risk.

Occupational hazards exist in all workplaces. **A hazard is any activity, situation or substance that can cause harm.** Hazards are divided into two broad categories: health hazards and safety hazards.

Generally, **health hazards** cause occupational illnesses such as noise-induced hearing loss, respiratory problems caused by exposure to chemical substances or repetitive strain injuries. A health hazard may cause long-term or chronic problems. Someone with an occupational illness may not recognize the symptoms immediately. For example, noise-induced hearing loss is often difficult for victims to detect until it is advanced.

There are five types of hazards that can cause occupational illnesses:

- Chemical hazards such as battery acid and cleaning supplies
- Biological hazards such as bacteria, viruses, dusts and animal bites
- Physical agents (energy sources) strong enough to harm the body, such as electric currents, heat, light, vibration, noise and radiation
- Work design (ergonomic) hazards such as lighting, repetitive movements, and video display terminals
- Stress from shift work or harassment in the workplace

Safety hazards cause immediate physical harm such as cuts, broken bones or back injuries. Some examples of safety hazards include:

- Slipping/tripping hazards (such as electrical cords across floors or spilled liquids)
- Fire and explosion hazards
- Moving parts of machinery, tools and equipment
- Work at height (such as work done on scaffolds or ladders)
- Pressure systems (such as steam boilers and pipes)
- Vehicles (such as forklifts and trucks)
- Lifting and other manual handling operations
- Materials falling from height, rolling, shifting or caving in
- Hazards posed by violence, working alone or in isolated workplaces

Once hazards in the workplace have been identified and the risk they pose assessed, there are three steps to controlling the risks:

1. **Eliminate hazards** posed by equipment and work processes at the source (for example, replace faulty equipment, redesign how the work is done and substitute a safer chemical for a hazardous chemical).
2. If it is not practical to eliminate the hazard, **control the hazard** to reduce the risk to workers (for example, use machine guards, noise enclosures and ventilation to dilute the concentration of a hazardous substance).
3. If it is not practical to control the hazard, **protect workers from the hazard** through the use of safe work procedures, effective safety training, proper supervision or personal protective equipment.

Some curriculum guides in the practical and applied arts area (for example, welding, horticulture, electrical, auto body) also include hazard supplements that address recognizing hazards and the health and safety regulations that relate to the industry.

Workplace inspections

Workplace inspections are an important part of a safety system. They help focus attention on hazards in the work environment.

An inspection is a well-planned, thorough examination designed to identify and fix health and safety threats. Inspections are conducted every day:

- Workers inspect their tools, equipment, machinery, supplies, and personal protective equipment.
- Supervisors inspect work practices and review the safety of work areas.
- Managers review the effectiveness of their supervisors' health and safety activities.
- Occupational Health Committees (OHCs) and worker health and safety representatives check and help maintain the effectiveness of the inspections conducted by workers, supervisors and managers.

Examples of inspections required by the legislation:

- 1. Inspections of plant** - The law (Regulation 23) requires every employer to regularly inspect the workplace, the technologies of production and associated supplies. Supervisors, safety specialists, and workers can handle these inspections.
- 2. Inspections by committees and representatives** - OHCs and representatives conduct regular, planned inspections of the workplace, participate in inspections by occupational health officers, and perform special inspections when conditions change or a concern must be investigated. The employer corrects problems and ensures the workplace complies with the law (Regulation 28).

Good inspection systems gradually review all operations, with special attention to workers' concerns, high hazard activities and work processes.

Handout 8: *Don't Risk Your Life* Video Discussion Guide

(Teacher's copy)

1. **What would you have done differently if you were in the same workplace situation as the young people portrayed in this video? Have you encountered similar situations at work or at school?**

Answer: I would ask questions of my employer and make sure I understood the safety procedures, including lock-out procedures for working with specific equipment.

Gather students' comments and experiences.

2. **Do you think there is pressure to do the tasks you are told to do – even if you are not sure how to do them? How do you handle this pressure without getting hurt or fired? What could you say?**

Answer: Gather students' opinions and experiences.

Mention that further discussion around this topic will occur in a later lesson. Note students' concerns and comments to use in role play situations in Activity 7.

3. **What could you actively do to prevent similar tragedies in your workplace?**

Answer: Gather student opinions and comments such as receive training, ask if you don't know how to do something, slow down, and use safe guards on equipment.

Handout 9: A Hazard Control System

In Saskatchewan, anyone with responsibilities for health and safety must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to avoid harm or an offense to the law. This is called due diligence. It includes and goes beyond what the legislation covers. It is a principle of common law that describes a very high standard to take reasonable care. One aspect of due diligence is recognizing and controlling hazards in the workplace.

The following steps are a simple, practical and effective way to recognize, assess, and control hazards. The steps are useful for daily or comprehensive workplace inspections.

Step 1: See it!

A hazard is any situation, activity, procedure or equipment that may result in harm to a person. When spotting hazards, focus on all workplace tasks, equipment, substances and work procedures.

To help you **see** hazards in the workplace, keep the following in mind:

- Consider information about working conditions from your family, neighbours, co-workers, employer (e.g., workplace standards).
- Use your common sense.
- Look for hazardous substances and unsafe conditions in the workplace.
- Ask about past incidents and near incidents in the workplace.
- Read any product literature and information from suppliers.
- Check out old, new, or unfamiliar equipment before using it.

Keep an eye out for hazards 24
hours a day, every day!

Step 2: Think it!

You should next determine the risk of harm from these hazards. This will help you decide which hazards should be taken care of immediately. Risk mainly depends on two factors:

- The likelihood of an incident – Is it likely or unlikely?
- The severity of the incident – Could it cause death, serious injury, or minor injury?

	Likely	Unlikely
Death & Serious Injury	A	B
Minor injury	C	D

Classify all hazards you see as

A, B, C, or D.

Eliminate or control **A** hazards first.

Hazards can vary in their risk, depending on the experience, training, and physical and mental abilities of the individual.

Make sure you tackle the high-risk hazards with more urgency than the low-risk hazards.

Step 3: Do it!

There are several ways to control a hazard. You may be able to take care of some hazards right away – wipe up water spilled on the floor, put trash in the garbage bin, or put supplies back in their proper storage spot.

You may not be able to take care of other hazards immediately. They will need to be reported to your supervisor or employer. In some workplaces, hazards are also reported to the Occupational Health Committee or the worker health and safety representative. You can also point out hazards to the committee or your employer when they do workplace inspections.

The employer will need to implement the most effective way to control the hazard. The employer will also need to provide workers with training about the hazard.

Three main ways to control hazards²

Hazard control should involve the following: Try 1 before 2, and 2 before 3.

4. Eliminate hazards!

Eliminate hazards posed by equipment and work processes at the source. For example, replace faulty equipment.

Eliminating hazards is the most desirable step in making the work environment safe.

2. Prevent or minimize exposure to the risk!

Prevent or minimize exposure to the risk by:

- a) **Substitution:** Substitute a less hazardous material, process, or piece of equipment to do the same task. For example, an employer could substitute a safer chemical for a hazardous chemical.
- b) **Redesign:** Redesign the workplace, the equipment or work processes.
- c) **Isolation:** Isolate the hazard. For example, in a deli the blade of a meat slicer has a metal guard.

These measures may include engineering controls. For example, use noise buffers or enclosures, ventilation to dilute the concentration of a hazardous substance, or guards to protect from cuts and puncture wounds.

3. Protect the workers!

Protect the workers if other controls are not feasible. Protect them through:

- a) **Administrative controls:** For example, training, supervision, changing the pace of work, job rotation. All workers should be trained in safe work procedures.
- b) **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** You should use proper clothes and masks for handling dangerous chemicals or biohazards.

² Adapted from a Guide published by the WorkSafe Western Australia Commission.

Hierarchy of control	
Most effective	Eliminate!
Less effective	<p>Prevent or minimize exposure to the risk!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitution • Redesign • Isolation
Least effective	<p>Protect the worker!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative controls • Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The steps	What they mean
See it!	What is the hazard?
Think it!	Why is this a hazardous situation?
Do it!	What can be done to prevent an incident or injury?

Handout 10: Recognizing Hazards in the Workplace

Think about what your first job in this area of work could be like. In your mind, make a picture of your workplace and what it looks like. Think about how you could answer the following questions. **Use your imagination.** Be creative!

See it! Think it! Do it!		
Questions	Activity	Situation
Write down one unsafe activity and one unsafe situation you might find at work.		
Why is this a hazardous activity or situation? What is the potential for injury? What injury or health problem could result?		
What would you do to deal with the hazard? How could you prevent an incident from happening?		

Handout 10: Recognizing Hazards in the Workplace

(Teacher's copy)

Possible responses are provided for example pictures of work sites. If you are using job titles or your own pictures of students in work situations, refer to the additional or alternative activity 2, teacher's copy and *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* for specific information. You may also find it useful to refer to the examples of health and safety hazards discussed in the background notes for Activity 4.

See it	Think it	Do it
<p>Housekeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No guard rails around open hole • Long belt end hanging loose • Nails sticking out of planks • Wearing running shoes and no hard hat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could fall in or down • Could catch long belt end on nails • Could land on hammer • Nail could go through shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build proper guard rail around hole • Use proper fall equipment • Use wider planking or platform for standing on • Fix the end of the belt • Wear proper footwear and a hard hat
<p>Conveyor belt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker has a hand under the conveyor belt • No safety glasses even though there is fine grit and small stones • Long sleeves could easily get caught in the belt • Drinking coffee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveyor belt could start and catch the worker's hand • Worker could bump the belt and cause the rocks and dust to get in the face • Could spill hot coffee and burn self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a lock-out system to ensure no one starts the equipment while the worker is checking it • Take a break. Don't try to do work and recreation at the same time • Wear safety glasses
<p>Ladder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second rung is cracked • Repaired with a piece of pipe that may not be strong enough • Left stabilizing foot of ladder is missing • No treads on steps, just bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rung could break and worker could fall • Ladder could slip away from the wall • Workers could lose their footing on the rungs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a new ladder • Refuse to use the ladder

<p>Unclean storage room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological or chemical health hazards • Improper storage of materials • Unclean working conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The piled cans could fall over and injure a worker • Someone could slip on the floor • Liquids could spill out of containers and cause fumes, explosions or fires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort and store materials properly • Get new shelving • Take Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems (WHMIS) training to learn what the symbols on the containers mean and how to safely use and store the products
<p>Worker in trench</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose material along sides of trench • No protective structures to stabilize the trench • Walls of trench are almost perpendicular • Front end loader very close to the edge of the trench 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker could not get out of trench safely without causing a landslide • Edge of trench could cave in due to weight of vehicle • Load could be dumped on worker • Worker could be smothered or crushed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the regulations for trenching, including the degree of slope allowed in the trench walls and providing a safe means for the worker to exit the trench • Build retaining structure to prevent cave-ins • Have a spotter (another worker) to help the front end loader driver know when he or she is getting too close to the edge of the trench • Have worker leave the trench before the vehicle's load is dumped • Clear loose soil from edge of trench

Handout 10: Recognizing Hazards in the Workplace

Additional or alternative activity 2

(Teacher's copy)

Occupations	Examples of hazards	Examples of preventive measures
Retail sales clerk: pet store	Infectious diseases, bites, scratches, manual handling of supplies (strains and sprains), and air quality issues Potential for harassment or violence from customers	Training in safe work procedures and use of personal protective equipment Awareness of, and training in, policies for harassment and for dealing with irate customers
Retail worker: grocery store	Back strain, repetitive motion injuries, falling objects, and slipping/tripping Potential for harassment or violence from customers	Training in safe work procedures (e.g., lifting), WHMIS (cleaning products) and good housekeeping practices (e.g., cleaning spills, keeping aisles clear). Awareness of and training in policies for harassment and for dealing with irate customers
Office worker	Ergonomic hazards related to computer screen position, suitability of chair, and positioning of hands on keyboard Improper lighting could also cause eye strain	Ergonomic assessment and training Use of wrist rest, ergonomic chair, and exercises to reduce the effects of repetitive motions
Waitress/waiter	Potential for burns, slips and falls, back problems, strains and sprains, violence and harassment	Training in safe work procedures, good housekeeping practices, and the company's harassment and violence policies
Kitchen worker	Burns (fire, hot oil, hot water), cuts from sharp utensils, heat stress, slips and falls, back strain, smoke inhalation from poor ventilation of grills, and chemicals in cleaning products.	Training in safe work procedures, good housekeeping practices, and WHMIS Check ventilation systems to ensure they are adequate, and examine traffic flow patterns in the kitchen

Handout 11: Training for New Workers

All employers have responsibilities for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of the workers in their workplaces. Employers must provide training to new workers about the safety policies, safe work procedures and hazards specific to that workplace. The following topics need to be included in the orientation:

- Safety procedures and practices specific to the industry or type of work conducted at the workplace (e.g. hospitals, auto body shops, glass installation, wholesale bakeries, food preparation, and retail shops)
- Information about any hazards in the workplace and the procedures developed to address the hazards (may include policies about harassment and violence, as well as protection from physical, chemical or biological hazards)
- Use of the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) to identify hazardous materials in the workplace and the precautions to be taken when working with the materials
- Location of first aid supplies or facilities
- Procedures in the event of fire or other emergencies
- Identification of prohibited or restricted areas
- Personal protective equipment (training in its limitations and how to use and maintain it properly)
- Procedures for reporting hazards and incidents

“An employer shall ensure that no worker is permitted to perform work unless the worker:

- has been trained, and has sufficient experience, to perform the work safely and in compliance with the Act and the regulations; or
- is under close and competent supervision.”

(The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996 clauses 19(4))(a and b)

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996 clause 2(1)(eee) states that train:

“means to give information and explanation to a worker with respect to a particular subject-matter and require a practical demonstration that the worker has acquired knowledge or skill related to the subject-matter.”

Activity 5: Workers' Rights & Responsibilities – The Right to Participate

Learning objectives

- To understand the rights (to know, to participate, and to refuse) and responsibilities of workers
- To explain the role and responsibilities of Occupational Health Committees

Materials

- Flipchart or overheads
- *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* (download from www.publications.gov.sk.ca)
- Occupational Health Committee information at www.saskatchewan.ca/business/safety-in-the-workplace/ohc-and-ohs-representative/ohc
- *Handout 13: Occupational Health Committees Fact Sheet*

Time: 45 minutes

Activity

1. Discuss the purpose of the activity with the students. Explain that the activity will involve brainstorming, class discussion and completion of a question sheet.
2. Using a flipchart or white board, review the three rights workers have: the **Right to Participate**, the **Right to Know**, and the **Right to Refuse**.

Ask students to define and give examples of each of the three rights. For the **Right to Participate**, ensure students mention that workers have a right to participate in workplace health and safety by reporting hazards and unsafe working conditions and by becoming a member of the Occupational Health Committee (OHC) or worker health and safety representative.
3. Using the flipchart, or prepared overheads, review worker responsibilities for safety in the workplace. Ask students to give examples of the responsibilities workers have in the workplace.
4. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with the question sheet, *How do I participate in health and safety in the workplace?* and a copy of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996*. Give the class **25 minutes** to complete the questions on the sheet.

5. Discuss the answers to the questions and direct students to www.saskatchewan.ca/business/safety-in-the-workplace/ohc-and-ohs-representative/ohc for more information.
6. To assess students' understanding about their right to participate in health and safety in the workplace, ask students to provide a written response (to be handed in) to the following scenario. Allow students about **15–20 minutes** to answer the question.

You are a member of the Occupational Health Committee in your workplace. Your boss has just hired five new workers. He has asked you to talk to the new hires about the OHC and its role in helping to keep this workplace safe and healthy. What will you tell them about the committee, how it works, what it does and why it is important to know about?

Additional or alternative activities

1. Invite a member of an OHC to talk to your class about his or her experiences. The speaker could also discuss the purpose and role the OHC plays in his or her workplace.
2. Establish an OHC in your classroom. Assign the committee a variety of tasks such as conducting mini-inspections and writing reports. Alternatively, role play meetings, responses to worker concerns, and orientation of new workers.

Evaluation

1. Informally assess students as they participate in the group discussion. Are their contributions thoughtful, contextual and well-reasoned? Did they interact well in the small group, co-operate with others, respect others' opinions and help keep the discussion on track?
2. Their written responses should illustrate a clear understanding of:
 - Committee structure
 - Committee duties, functions and roles
 - How committees enable workers to participate in keeping their workplaces healthy and safe

Handout 12: How do I participate in health and safety in the workplace?

Refer to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act, Part III* and *The Regulations, Part IV* to answer the following questions. In addition to the answer, please identify where you found the answer. Provide:

- The specific section or regulation number (1, 15, 16)
 - The letter in front of the applicable sub-clause (a, b, c)
 - The page number on which you found the answer
 - Whether it is found in the act or the regulations
1. Where are Occupational Health Committees required?
 - a) Generally

 - b) At construction sites

 2. What kinds of workplaces are required to have occupational health and safety representatives?

 3. Who is responsible for organizing committees?

 7. How many members must the committee have?

 8. How must representation on the committee be balanced between employer and worker members?

9. How must committee members be selected in:
 - a) Union workplaces

 - b) Non-union workplaces

10. As a worker, how do you find out who is your representative or on your committee?

11. How long do committee members serve?

12. What are the duties of the committee?

13. How often must the committee meet?

14. Read the act, sections 3-10 and regulations, section 13. Summarize below workers' responsibilities for safety in the workplace.

Handout 12: How do I participate in health and safety in the workplace?

(Teacher's copy)

Refer to Part III of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and Part IV of the *Regulations* to answer the following questions. In addition to the answers, please identify where you found the answer. Provide:

- The specific section or regulation number (1, 15, 16)
- The letter in front of the applicable sub-clause (a, b, c)
- The page number on which you found the answer
- Whether it is found in the act or the regulations

1. Where are Occupational Health Committees required?

a) Generally

Answer: In workplaces where there are 10 or more workers. (The act, sub-section 3-22(1)).

b) At construction sites

Answer: The contractor must establish a committee if the site has 10 or more workers or self-employed persons working (or likely to be working) for 90 days. (The regulations, section 38).

2. What kinds of workplaces require occupational health and safety representatives?

Answer: Representatives are required in high hazard workplaces with five to nine workers as set out in Table 7 of the regulations. (The act, sub-section 3-24(1) and the regulations, section 45).

3. Who is responsible for organizing committees or designating a health and safety representative?

Answer: The employer must ensure the committee is structured and maintained as required. (The act, clause 3-22(1)(a)).

4. How many members must the committee have?

Answer: Each OHC must have at least two, but not more than 12 members. (The act, sub-section 3-22(2)).

5. How must representation on the committee be balanced between the employer and worker members?

Answer: Management members may not outnumber worker members. At least half must be workers not involved in management who are either selected by their union or elected by their co-workers. (The act, sub-section 3-22(3)).

6. How must committee members be selected in:

a) Union workplaces

Answer: At a unionized workplace, committee members must be appointed as required by the union's constitution. The employer selects management representatives. (The act, clause 3-22(4)(b)).

b) Non-union workplaces

Answer: In a non-union workplace, the workers must elect their committee members. (The act, clause 3-22(4)(a)).

7. As a worker, how do you find out who is your representative or your committee members?

Answer: The employer must post the names of the OHC members and representative in the workplace. (The act, sub-sections 3-25 (1) and (2)).

8. How long do committee members serve?

Answer: Each committee member is to serve for three years. (The regulations, sub-section 39 (1b)).

9. What are the duties of the committee?

Answer: Duties of committees include:
(The act, section 3-27)

- To handle workers' health and safety concerns
- To inspect the workplace to identify, eliminate and control safety hazards
- To investigate incidents
- To handle refusals to work

10. How often must the committee meet?

Answer: The first meeting must be held within two weeks of committee set up. The committee must then meet at least once each month for three months and then at least once every three months. (The regulations, section 41).

11. Read the act, sections 3-10 and 3-20. Summarize below workers' responsibilities for safety in the workplace.

Answer: As a worker, you have the responsibility to:

- Work and act safely on the job
- Co-operate with the employer, supervisor, committee or representative to keep the workplace safe
- Use safety equipment and personal protective equipment correctly and as required
- Conduct yourself in a safe and respectable manner
- Not initiate or participate in harassment

Handout 13: Occupational Health Committees Fact Sheet

Why set up a committee?

- Employers are required by law to protect the health and safety of workers.
- Committees help employers improve health and safety in the workplace.
- They give advice and recommend ways to eliminate and reduce workplace hazards.
- Workers can exercise their right to participate in health and safety in the workplace.

Occupational Health Committees (OHCs) are required in all workplaces with 10 or more workers. Worker health and safety representatives are required in high hazard industries with five to nine workers. Employers are required to consult and co-operate with the committee or representative.

What do committees do?

Occupational Health Committees help to reduce incidents and illnesses in the workplace. They help employers and workers co-operate to identify, eliminate and lessen workplace hazards.

Occupational Health Committees

- Help employers identify, assess, and control hazards
- Talk with workers about health and safety concerns
- Encourage better communication between employers and workers
- Recommend ways the employer can improve workplace health and safety
- Conduct regular inspections
- Take part in the investigation of incidents and dangerous occurrences
- Help employers meet legal health and safety requirements and investigate refusals to work

Employers have the ultimate responsibility to act on the Occupational Health Committee's advice and recommendations. They must deal with committee recommendations. If an employer does not agree with a recommendation, the employer must send the committee a written report saying why.

How do I set up a committee?

One way an employer can set up a committee is to:

- Meet with workers and their representatives, supervisors or managers to explain what a committee is, why you want one set up, and how to select members.
- Ask workers and managers to explain the selection process to workers.
- Give workers time to select members.
- Hold the first meeting within two weeks of the selection; appoint an employer co-chair at that meeting and ask workers to select their co-chair.
- Conduct a workplace inspection soon after the first meeting; discuss health and safety concerns with workers and meet to discuss those concerns.
- Post minutes of the meeting in the workplace.

Occupational Health Committee structure

- A committee must have between two and 12 members; at least half must be workers (not management).
- Union workplaces must appoint committee members as required by the union's constitution.
- In a non-union workplace, workers must elect their committee members.
- Employers select employer members; they must not outnumber worker members.
- It is important to have workers representative of all worker concerns. For example, shift workers should have their concerns fairly represented.

The names of committee members must be posted in the workplace so workers know who their members are.

Committee co-chairs

- Each committee must have two co-chairs. Employers select one and workers select the other at the first committee meeting.
- Co-chairs must be trained in their role and responsibilities.
- Co-chairs have equal rights and responsibilities, including the right to call and chair meetings.
- The employer co-chair keep the employer informed about committee work. The worker co-chair keeps workers informed. Both are entitled to receive information from the Occupational Health and Safety Division. Either may distribute it to workers.

Committee meeting information (minutes)

- Committee meeting minutes are summaries of meetings and must be taken at every OHC meeting.
- OHCs are required to keep meeting minutes and provide copies to their employers.
- Employers are required to keep the minutes on file in a central, accessible location and ensure they are readily available for workers, committee members and occupational health officers who may need to view them.

- If there is an incident, an occupational health officer can request minutes. Failing to keep meeting minutes will result in enforcement action up to and including prosecution.

How long do members serve on the committee?

- Members serve a three-year term and may serve more than one term.
- Members should not leave committees until replacements are found.

Employers are legally responsible for setting up a committee and getting it working.

Activity 6: Workers' Rights & Responsibilities - The Right to Refuse

Learning objectives

- To understand the rights (to know, to participate, to refuse) and responsibilities of workers
- To describe the steps in a refusal to work situation

Materials

- Background notes
- *Handout 14: Steps in a Refusal to Work* and *Handout 15: Right to Refuse Case Studies*

Time: 30 minutes

Activity

1. Using the background notes, explain to students their right to refuse work they believe to be unusually dangerous to themselves or others. Emphasize that this right, as identified in section 3-31 of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, applies only to health and safety matters.
2. Identify the process or series of steps that must be followed when refusing work believed to be unusually dangerous. Ensure students are aware that if they have any safety concerns about their work or are unsure of their rights or responsibilities, they should contact their workplace Occupational Health Committee or representative. If no committee exists, call Occupational Health and Safety at the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.
3. Provide students with *Handout 14: Steps in a Refusal to Work*.
4. Divide the class into small groups. Provide students with copies of *Handout 15: Right to Refuse Case Studies*. Allow about **10 minutes** for students to complete the questions.
5. Discuss students' answers to the questions.
6. Summarize the key messages of the activity:
 - Workers have the right to refuse work they believe is unusually dangerous to themselves or others.
 - The **Right to Refuse** applies only to health and safety matters.
 - The refusing worker is protected from discriminatory action against him or her.

- There is a specific procedure or series of steps to follow when refusing work you believe is unusually dangerous.
- Talk to your Occupational Health Committee or representative or call Occupational Health and Safety if unsure of your rights and responsibilities.

Additional or alternative activity

Assign students to role play one of the case studies outlined in the **Right to Refuse** case studies worksheet or have students create their own role play situations. Ask them to include the steps to follow in the refusal as part of the role play.

Evaluation

1. Observe students' group interactions during the activity.

Did they co-operate fully during the activity?

Were their contributions relevant, thoughtful and contextual?

Did they respect other students' ideas and beliefs and encourage others to participate?

2. Assess students' responses to the question sheet.

Did they understand the concept that underscores the right to refuse work they believe is unusually dangerous?

Did they treat the subject matter seriously?

Could they apply the process for refusing work to the case studies?

Background notes³

Under Section 3-31 of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, each worker has the right to refuse work that he or she believes is unusually dangerous. The unusual danger may threaten the worker or others. An unusual danger could include:

- A danger that is not normal for the job
- A danger that would normally stop work
- A situation for which the worker isn't properly trained, equipped or experienced

Section 3-31 of the act applies only to health and safety matters. It is an **individual worker's decision** (not the decision of a group of workers) that has to be based on a personal belief that the work is unusually dangerous or has become more dangerous than is acceptable for the job.

Saskatchewan was the first jurisdiction in Canada to enact the **Right to Refuse**. We cherish it. The **Right to Refuse** should only be used when a worker has a genuine reason to believe work has become more dangerous than is acceptable for the job. The right to refuse work must not be abused. For example, groups cannot use it as an excuse to strike.

If the refusal is used for legitimate health and safety reasons, the worker is legally protected from discipline or other sanction by the employer (Act, section 3-35). The worker may continue to refuse the work until the necessary steps are taken to satisfy the worker that the job is not unusually dangerous or until the occupational health officer has investigated the refusal and found that the job is not unusually dangerous. During the refusal, the worker must remain at the workplace unless the employer advises otherwise.

Most work refusals are resolved without the intervention of an occupational health officer. This is the procedure that should be followed for a work refusal:

1. The refusing worker should inform the employer or supervisor that he or she is refusing work because of a health and safety concern.
2. The refusing worker should try to resolve the problem with the employer or supervisor. It is important that the refusing worker not leave the site without the employer's permission. Most refusals are resolved at this stage.
3. The employer/supervisor has the right to assign the refusing worker to other work (at no loss of pay or benefits) until the matter is resolved.
4. Under the act, section 3-34, an employer cannot assign another worker to the disputed job unless the replacement worker is first advised in writing about:

³ Adapted from the *Instructor's Guide. Occupational Health and Safety Committee Training, Level 1*, Occupational Health and Safety, Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

- The refusal to work and the reason for it
- Why the employer believes the replacement worker can do the disputed job safely
- The right of the replacement worker to refuse the work
- The steps to follow when exercising this right

The replacement worker may have had more experience or training in the assigned work and, therefore, not consider it to be unusually dangerous.

5. If the problem cannot be resolved at the initial stage, the Occupational Health Committee co-chairs should be asked to help. The role of the co-chairs is to help work out a solution. They do not have the authority to rule on whether the work is unusually dangerous. (If there is no Occupational Health Committee or safety representative, contact the Occupational Health and Safety Division, Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.)
6. If the problem is still not resolved, the occupational health co-chairs should convene an emergency meeting of the committee to investigate the refusal. If necessary, the committee will rule on whether or not the job is unusually dangerous. The committee does this by investigating the refusal and voting. A unanimous vote by a quorum of the committee is required to rule against a refusal.
7. If there is no Occupational Health Committee, if the committee cannot resolve the problem, or if either the worker or employer is not satisfied with the committee's decision, the issue should be referred to the Occupational Health and Safety Division. An occupational health officer will then investigate the refusal and provide a written decision to the parties.
8. The results of the investigation should be communicated to all workers. One way of doing this is to summarize the results on a committee minute form and post it in the workplace for everyone to read. If the officer rules against the refusal, the worker should return to work even if the decision is being appealed. Anyone involved can appeal the officer's ruling to the director of Occupational Health and Safety.
9. The Occupational Health Committee should monitor the effectiveness of any corrective action taken to resolve the issue or problem that lead to the refusal.

A worker is legally protected from disciplinary action or other sanctions by the employer for fulfilling their responsibilities or exercising their rights under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. If an employer does take action against a worker, and the worker believes that it was done because of legitimate health and safety activities, he or she can make a complaint to the Occupational Health and Safety Division, Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Under the act, section 3-36, an officer must investigate any complaint of discriminatory action. An officer who finds that discriminatory action has been taken will issue a **notice of contravention** requiring the employer to:

- Cease the discriminatory action
- Reinstatement the worker to his or her former terms and conditions of employment
- Pay the worker back wages that would have been earned had the discriminatory action not been taken
- Remove any reference of the matter from the worker's employment record
- Provide the occupational health officer with a progress report on any remedial action for the work that has been refused

If the officer does not find evidence of discriminatory action, he or she will advise all parties in writing.

Handout 14: Steps in a Refusal to Work

- 1. The worker should inform the supervisor of the refusal to work.**
 - The worker should inform the supervisor that the refusal is because of a health and safety matter.
 - The worker shouldn't leave the work site without permission from the employer.
 - During the refusal, the employer can give the refusing worker other work to do (at no loss in pay or benefits).

- 2. If the refusing worker and supervisor cannot resolve the concern, involve the Occupational Health Committee (OHC) chairpersons.**
 - **The co-chairs cannot rule on whether the disputed job is unusually dangerous.** They can only help to resolve the concern.

- 3. If the refusing worker is not satisfied, have the full committee investigate, hold a committee meeting, and vote on the refusal.**
 - If the co-chairs cannot resolve the refusal, they should hold an emergency meeting of the whole committee.
 - The committee investigates the incident and votes on whether or not the work is unusually dangerous. It takes a unanimous vote to rule against a refusal.
 - The committee advises the worker of the decision.

- 4. If the refusing worker is not satisfied, contact an occupational health officer at the Occupational Health and Safety Division, Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.**
 - The officer will investigate and make a written ruling on the matter.
 - The officer will inform the worker, OHC and the employer.

- 5. Inform workers about the result of the officer's investigation or ruling on the matter.**
 - The results of the investigation should be summarized on the committee's minute forms and posted for all workers to see.

- 6. Monitor the effectiveness of any corrective action taken.**
 - The committee should check on the effectiveness of any corrective action taken by the employer to correct the situation.

Handout 15: Right to Refuse Case Studies

Instructions

Read the six case studies and then answer the questions below.

1. Do you think any of these work situations would be a good candidate for a refusal to work under section 3-31 of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*?
2. State the reasons for your decision.
3. Where would you go to get advice and assistance with any of these situations if you didn't know what to do?
4. If you do decide to refuse the work as described in the situations, what should be your next step?
5. If the workers' concerns in any of these situations cannot be resolved, what further steps can they take?

Case study 1

You are a waitress working at a restaurant in your community. You are asked to wash the outside of the window of the building you work in. The window is sealed and cannot be opened from the inside. It can only be reached from the next window. You must sit on the edge of the next window and reach across it to wash the outside face of the sealed window. Another worker will hold your ankles to prevent you from falling. The window is on the 10th floor.

Case study 2

You work for a local hardware store. You are asked to shovel the snow off the roof of the storage shed. The roof has a slope of 45 degrees. Heavy ice is under the snow. The roof is not equipped with a lifeline or scaffold tie-in point. The roof of the nearby building collapsed recently because of heavy snow.

Case study 3

You were recently hired to operate a plastic food packaging press. The press forms and stamps raw plastic sheets into rectangular cups to hold processed food. The gate of the press opens upwards to allow the operator to reach into the mechanism. The gate consists of a heavy aluminum frame around a large transparent Plexiglas viewing panel. The gate has a safety shutoff that cuts power to the machine when it is opened. The Plexiglas viewing panel shattered some months ago and has not been repaired. Glass from the broken panel has gotten into the press mechanism and the safety shut-off switch. Neither works reliably anymore. The press jams frequently. Sometimes it starts when the gate is open.

Case study 4

You have been hired to make sandwiches in a sandwich shop. This morning you have been told to slice meat using a high-speed slicing machine. You have not been given any training on the machine.

Case study 5

Workers threaten to refuse work as a group.

Case study 6

You work for a local construction company. You and a co-worker have been told to drive a flatbed truck into town to get a large amount of lumber and bricks for the job that is being worked on. Neither of you has driven a truck before nor have you any training in driving a heavily loaded vehicle.

Handout 15: Right to Refuse Case Studies

(Teacher's copy)

Case study 1

You are a waitress working at a restaurant in your community. You are asked to wash the outside of the window of the building you work in. The window is sealed and cannot be opened from the inside. It can only be reached from the next window. You must sit on the edge of the next window and reach across it to wash the outside face of the sealed window. Another worker will hold your ankles to prevent you from falling. The window is on the 10th floor.

Answer

This would be good candidate for refusal because of the falling hazard. The employer is violating the need for scaffolding and personal protective equipment as required under the legislation (The regulations, sections 169 and 86).

You should first tell your supervisor that you are refusing to do this work because of a health and safety concern.

If you are unsure of what to do, you should contact Occupational Health Committee members to discuss the issue. If there is no committee, call the Occupational Health and Safety Division, Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Case study 2

You work for a local hardware store. You are asked to shovel the snow off the roof of the storage shed. The roof has a slope of 45 degrees. Heavy ice is under the snow. The roof is not equipped with a lifeline or scaffold tie-in point. The roof of the nearby building collapsed recently because of heavy snow.

Answer

This would be a good candidate because of the falling hazard. The employer should provide fall protection and ensure the roof is equipped to allow the protection to be installed and used properly. Alternatively, hire a professional snow removal company to clean off the roof.

Case study 3

You were recently hired to operate a plastic food packaging press. The press forms and stamps raw plastic sheets into rectangular cups to hold processed food. The gate of the press opens upwards to allow the operator to reach into the mechanism. The gate consists of a heavy aluminum frame around a large transparent Plexiglas viewing panel. The gate has a safety shutoff that cuts power to the machine when it is opened. The Plexiglas viewing panel shattered some months ago and has not been repaired. Glass from the broken panel has gotten into the press mechanism and the safety shut-off switch. Neither works reliably anymore. The press jams frequently. Sometimes it starts when the gate is open.

Answer

This would be a good candidate because you have reasonable grounds to believe you could be seriously hurt if you continue to use the press. The press is unreliable and could inflict serious injury.

Case study 4

You have been hired to make sandwiches in a sandwich shop. This morning you have been told to slice meat using a high-speed slicing machine. You have not been given any training on the machine.

Answer

This would be a good candidate because you have reasonable grounds to believe you might be seriously hurt if you operate the meat slicing machine without proper training. Under OHS legislation, the employer must ensure the worker is properly trained (The regulations, section 19).

Case study 5

Workers threaten to refuse work as a group.

Answer

This is not a good candidate for a refusal to work because the workers are threatening to refuse as a group. (The act, section 3-31) The **Right to Refuse** only applies to individual workers. Each worker would have to individually use the **Right to Refuse**.

Case study 6

You work for a local construction company. You and a co-worker have been told to drive a flatbed truck into town to get a large amount of lumber and bricks for the job that is being worked on. Neither of you has driven a truck before nor have you any training in driving a heavily loaded vehicle.

Answer

This would be a good candidate because you have reasonable grounds to believe you might be hurt if you drive the truck without proper training. Under OHS legislation, the employer must ensure the worker is properly trained (The regulations, section 19).

You should inform your supervisor that you are refusing to do this work because of a health and safety concern.

If you are unsure of what to do, you should contact Occupational Health Committee members to discuss the issue. If there is no committee, call the Occupational Health and Safety Division, Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Activity 7: Using Your Knowledge in the Workplace

Learning objectives

- To identify health and safety questions to discuss with employers

Materials

- Flip chart paper and markers
- *Handout 16: Questions to Ask Your Employer*
- *Ready for Work* q-cards

Time: 45 minutes

Activity

1. Initiate a discussion with students by asking questions such as:

Is anyone working?

Did you receive any health and safety training when you started your job?

Were you shown how to do your job safely?

Did you ask your supervisor any questions about hazards in the workplace?

State that many young workers don't know that they have a responsibility to ask questions about health and safety.

2. Divide the class into small groups. Tell them they have just been hired as a... (assign each group a different job). Each group is to brainstorm and record on flip chart paper a list of possible questions to ask their supervisor about health and safety.

3. Post flip charts and discuss.

Ask the students how comfortable they would feel about asking their supervisor these questions:

What could they do to help themselves feel more comfortable?

When would be a good time to talk to their supervisor?

How would they phrase the questions?

4. Distribute *Handout 16: Questions to Ask Your Employer*.
5. To summarize, review employer and worker rights and responsibilities.

6. Provide information from *Guide for New Workers, Tips for Young Workers* and the *Ready for Work* q-card.

Additional or alternative activities

1. Divide class into small groups. Assign each group an industry or job and one of the questions from *Handout 16: Questions to Ask Your Employer*. Each group will brainstorm answers they might hear from an employer. Role play asking the questions and possible responses.
2. Refer to comments and concerns raised by students in Activity 5. Have students work in small groups to plan and practice how to “say no” in a positive manner.
3. Refer to *Module 8: Fairness Works: Employment Standards for Young Workers* for strategies related to handling conflict in the workplace: managing anger, conflict resolution strategies, and negotiating your way to a solution.

Evaluation

Conduct final evaluation of the module. Methods of evaluation could include:

- Role plays of key concepts
- Role plays about how to deal with health and safety concerns in the workplace
- Reports on topics such as the safety policies of an employer in the community
- Essays on topics such as comparing the injuries of young workers in Saskatchewan with injuries of young workers in other provinces
- Interviews with parents, friends, or others about health and safety training related to their first workplace experiences.

Handout 16: Questions to Ask Your Employer

1. When will I receive job safety training and orientation?
2. What hazards or risks I should be aware of in this job?
3. Who do I talk to if I have questions about carrying out a task safely?
4. If I notice something wrong, who should I report it to?
5. What health and safety procedures do I need to follow?
6. What safety equipment do I need to do my job?
7. Will I receive training on how to use the personal protective equipment (PPE) required for the job?
8. Who do I need to tell if I get hurt? Who is the first aid person?
9. What should I do in case of fire or another emergency?
10. Where do I find fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and emergency assistance?
11. What are my responsibilities regarding health and safety?
12. Is there an Occupational Health Committee or an occupational health and safety representative in this workplace? How do I contact them?

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