



# The Curtis Zanussi Story

## **Rights and Responsibilities of Young Workers: A Discussion Guide**

Young workers (ages 15 to 24) are at greater risk of being injured on the job than any other group of workers. More than half of all serious injuries and fatalities involving young workers occur during their first six months on a job.

This discussion guide is meant to accompany The Curtis Zanussi Story, a video which is available for download at [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com). This guide describes the rights and responsibilities related to young workers in the workplace, and offers suggestions for facilitating group discussion after viewing.

This discussion guide can be used by employers or supervisors as a basis for a safety talk, or by anyone working or connected with youth to introduce and discuss the topic of young worker health and safety.

There are two video versions of The Curtis Zanussi Story. In the [shorter version](#) (3 minutes 59 seconds), Curtis tells the story of his near-fatal accident. It's well suited for a young audience because it is brief, with an emotional impact that gets the health and safety message across. The [longer version](#) (6 minutes 43 seconds) includes more detail, with commentary from WorkSafeBC officers that is suitable for an employer audience.

## Before watching the video: Preparation

It's a good idea to provide some background and explain a few facts to your audience before watching the video.

### 1 Explain what the video is meant to do.

- Show how vulnerable young workers are in the workplace.
- Highlight the responsibilities that employers and supervisors have to keep young workers safe.
- Describe the rights and responsibilities of all workers in British Columbia.
- Emphasize the uniquely personal nature of a severe workplace accident and how it affects others, including family and co-workers.
- The [injury rate](#) for young male workers is more than 50% higher than the injury rate for all workers in B.C.
- Approximately 20% of young worker injury claims occur in the construction industry.
- The service sector, which includes restaurants and other businesses in tourism and hospitality, is the industry with the most young worker injury claims (29%). Retail and wholesale industries also see a lot of young worker claims (21%).

### 2 Provide some background facts.

- Young workers are at more risk of injury than their older and more experienced co-workers.
- Young workers tend to lack experience, may not understand their rights, and may be less willing to ask questions. They may also be exposed to more hazards than older workers because they may carry out more physical work in higher risk occupations.
- There are more than 360,000 young workers in B.C.
- Every day of the year, 29 young workers are injured in B.C. Every week, three are permanently disabled as a result of workplace injuries.

### 3 Introduce the video.

- The video is a true story about a construction accident that nearly killed 24-year-old Curtis Zanussi.
- If showing the long version of the video, explain that it includes additional commentary by WorkSafeBC officers about rights and responsibilities.
- Ask viewers to watch the video and consider the impact an accident like Curtis' would have on their lives, and on the lives of their family and friends.

In the five years from 2004 to 2008, more than 10,000 [young construction workers](#) were injured in B.C.

## After watching the video: Discussion

Discuss issues raised by the video. Talk about the impact of an accident not only on the injured worker, but also on those around the worker — family, co-workers, and employers. Focus some of the discussion on the importance of training and supervision, as well as the need for workers to use safe work practices.

### Potential discussion starters

- Why did the accident happen? What went wrong?
- How could this accident have been prevented?
- What can we learn from Curtis' experience?
- What messages does the video convey to young workers?
- What messages does it convey to employers and supervisors?
- What role do young workers play in keeping themselves safe?
- What roles do employers and supervisors play?
- What will you remember most about this video?
- In the future, how will you keep yourself safe at work?

# Rights and responsibilities

## Employer responsibilities

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace.
- Identify workplace hazards and assess the risk of injury associated with those hazards.
- Ensure that workers and supervisors are adequately instructed and trained. Keep written records of training (detailing who, what, and when).
- Establish and maintain an occupational health and safety program, including a written health and safety policy as well as a procedure for incident investigations.
- Support supervisors, safety coordinators, and workers in their health and safety activities.
- Take action immediately when a worker or supervisor informs you about a potentially hazardous situation.
- Initiate immediate incident investigations.
- Report serious incidents to WorkSafeBC.
- Provide adequate first aid facilities and services.
- Provide personal protective equipment where required.
- Ensure that workers follow the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and the *Workers Compensation Act*.

## Supervisor responsibilities

- Instruct workers in safe work procedures.
- Train workers for all tasks assigned to them, and check that their work is being done safely.
- Ensure that only authorized, trained workers operate tools and equipment or use hazardous chemicals.
- Ensure that workers follow safe work procedures for handling, storing, and maintaining equipment and materials.
- Enforce health and safety requirements.
- Correct unsafe acts and conditions immediately.
- Identify workers with problems that could affect safety at the worksite.
- Formulate health and safety rules and inspect the workplace for hazards.

## Worker rights and responsibilities

Workers have the right to:

- Work in a safe environment
- Receive appropriate training, orientation, and ongoing supervision
- Be supplied with well-maintained and properly functioning PPE
- Refuse unsafe work
- Participate in workplace health and safety committees and activities

Workers are responsible for the following:

- Know and follow health and safety requirements that apply to their jobs.
- Ask questions when they don't know how to do something safely, before beginning work.
- Participate in all required health and safety education and training.
- Work safely, and encourage co-workers to do the same.
- Use all required personal protective equipment and clothing.
- Correct any unsafe conditions, or immediately report them to a supervisor.
- Immediately report any injury to a first aid attendant or supervisor.
- Take the initiative. Make suggestions to improve health and safety.

The [rights and responsibilities](#) of young workers (as well as employers and supervisors) are law — they are described in [sections 115 to 117 of the \*Workers Compensation Act\*](#).

# Resources

## WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line

The WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line can answer your questions about workplace health and safety, worker and employer responsibilities, and reporting a workplace accident or incident. The Prevention Information Line accepts anonymous calls.

Phone 604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland, or 1 888 621-7233 (621-SAFE) toll-free in British Columbia.

To report after-hours and weekend accidents and emergencies, call 604 273-7711 in the Lower Mainland, or 1 866 922-4357 (WCB-HELP) toll-free in British Columbia.

## Publications

- [Training and Orientation for Young and New Workers](#)
- [Be a Survivor \(Young Workers Guide\)](#)
- [3 Steps to Effective Worker Education and Training](#)
- [Toolbox Meeting Guides — Trenches and Excavations](#)
- [Getting a Job? Ask Questions About Safety](#)

## Web resources

- Visit [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com) for information on health and safety requirements, accident prevention, first aid, and more.
- For specific information relating to young workers, go to [www2.worksafebc.com](http://www2.worksafebc.com), and under “Topics” click “Young Worker.” Additional information is also available on the youth-oriented web site [raiseyourhand.com](http://raiseyourhand.com).
- For specific information about health and safety in the construction industry, go to [www2.worksafebc.com](http://www2.worksafebc.com), and under “Industries” click “Construction.”
- Young workers can learn more by completing the self-paced, interactive [Rights and Responsibilities Program](#) online.

### **WorkSafeBC publications and videos**

Many publications and videos are available for download at WorkSafeBC.com. The web site also includes searchable versions of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and associated policies and guidelines, as well as excerpts and summaries of the *Workers Compensation Act*.

Some publications and videos are also available for purchase in print:

Phone: 604 232-9704

Toll-free phone: 1 866 319-9704

Fax: 604 232-9703

Toll-free fax: 1 888 232-9714

Online ordering: Visit the [WorkSafeBC.com Publications](#) page and follow the links for ordering.