

YOUNG WORKERS

A focus on young workers

There are more than 360,000 young workers in British Columbia who, like all workers, have a right to a safe and healthy workplace. Young workers, particularly male young workers, are at a much higher risk of injury than other workers. Historically, the injury rate for young males is approximately 60% higher than the injury rate for all B.C. workers.

Without job knowledge and experience, it's more difficult for youth to recognize potentially risky situations and equipment. Eager to please and unwilling to make waves, young workers may be hesitant to question the safety of work procedures or ask for proper safety training. Many feel pressured to complete a job quickly and can be swayed by peer pressure, regardless of the risk involved. And without a thorough understanding of their rights or responsibilities as workers, youth may be reluctant to ask questions or refuse to perform an unsafe work practice.

Thousands injured and six killed on the job

In 2007, 11,379 young workers were injured in workplace accidents¹. Last year, 6 young workers were killed in work-related accidents¹ in the follows industries:

Manufacturing	2
Oil and Gas	2
Fishing	1
Service	1

The recent trend for young worker injuries

- The injury rate for young workers today is 30% less than it was 10 years ago.
- There has been a slow down in this positive trend, however, and for the last five years the injury rate for all young workers and young male workers stayed virtually the same.

The most dangerous tasks for young workers

- Lifting objects as retail clerks, shipper-receivers, labourers, material handlers in a number of industries
- Working on ladders, stairs, scaffolding, and other raised areas in any industry
- Driving or riding in vehicles, and operating or working near mobile equipment in any industry
- Using knives in food service, retail sales, and supermarkets
- Working with hot substances or equipment in restaurants
- Operating food slicers in restaurants and supermarkets as deli sales clerks, cooks, food service helpers/preparers, and retail sales clerks
- Working near running equipment or machinery

¹ Includes *short term disability, long term disability, and fatal claims accepted in 2007, regardless of year of injury.*

² Fatal claims accepted in the year for young workers where the worker was aged 15-24 at the time of death.

Creative ways of promoting safety among young workers

Student Workplace Safety Video Contest

In partnership with Washington Marine Group, London Drugs Ltd., and BC Arts Teachers Association, WorkSafeBC organized the 3rd Annual Student Workplace Safety Video Contest. This year, 47 student teams that included 180 students submitted their videos showing creative ways of preventing injuries caused by machinery and falls from elevation.

Success Stories – Profiles of 13 Companies’ Young and New Workers Programs

This new video for employers was developed in partnership between BC Human Resources Management Association, Service Canada, and WorkSafeBC. The video profiles the successful orientation and training programs for young and new workers at thirteen companies. Managers and staff from the participating companies share their views on how to make workplaces safer for all, but especially for young and new workers.

Resources available to help young workers

- **Prevention Information Line**

WorkSafeBC offers support for workers, employers, and others who have questions or concerns about occupational safety and health. The Prevention Information Line at (604) 276-3100 or toll-free in B.C. at 1 888 621-SAFE (7233) can provide information on safety and health, or is available to report concerns anonymously.

- **Raise Your Hand Website**

This is an interactive site that allows youth to submit their own stories and pledge to work safely. In 2008, the site is being expanded to include social networking functionalities, an interactive calendar of the Raise Your Hand Youth Team’s activities, and a variety of contests. You can access it at: www.raiseyourhand.com

- **WorkSafeBC Website**

The recently redesigned Young Worker Health and Safety website is dedicated exclusively to young worker injury prevention. It includes a broad range of information for youth, parents, educators, employers, and other stakeholders. Some of the resources available for download at no charge are:

- The Lost Youth video
- Be a Survivor magazine
- Six Minute Safety Talks for Apprentices
- You’re a Pro video series
- Planning 10 modules
- Winning clips from previous student video contests

You can access it all at: www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/Home.asp

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