



**Workers' Compensation Board
of British Columbia**

***Young Worker Officer
Blitz Survey – Young Workers:***

Abbreviated Survey Results

January 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Findings:

Characteristics of Survey Sample

- The opinions in this survey are primarily those of young workers between the ages of 15 and 24 who currently work in the hospitality, restaurant, or construction sectors. Most have had more than one paid job.

Health and Safety Training

- Just under half of respondents (43%) have not received health and safety training in their school setting. This number is unchanged compared to last year's results (44%). For those who have received training, a majority has had the training delivered by either their CAPP coordinator or shops instructor. The training appears to have been well-received by the young workers in terms of its perceived usefulness and positive impact on health and safety awareness.
- Most respondents have been employed elsewhere, so it is not surprising that most have received health and safety training in a previous work setting (62%). This pattern is similar to results of previous surveys (63%). However, most of the training appears to be basic. For example, the most common form of training is locating emergency equipment, whereas only about a third participated in a general awareness seminar.

Supervisors

- When asked to whom they would speak about a workplace hazard, respondents still demonstrate an overwhelming preference for speaking to their supervisor (87%). This supports and even surpasses past survey findings, where 55% of respondents would elect to speak to their supervisor if they were concerned about dangers in the workplace. Supervisors are also still indicated as the preferred source for health and safety training.
- Based on the experience of respondents, supervisors are least likely to train workers to be safe, keep workers informed of safety rules, or praise safe work behaviours.

Workplace Health and Safety Rights, Obligations, and Attitudes

- There still appears to be some confusion among young workers concerning their workplace health and safety rights. For example, 42% of respondents either don't know or don't think that they are protected from being fired or punished if they refuse to work in unsafe conditions. This represents a slight decline over last year (39%).
- Asking questions is chosen most often as the "best piece of advice" ever received from a supervisor or co-worker about safety in the workplace. This finding complements the belief among respondents that inexperience is the largest contributor to young worker workplace accidents.
- Many of the workers surveyed (47%) claim that they don't need to be convinced about the importance of working "safe." This represents a sizable improvement over last year, where less than a third of respondents held similar attitudes. Knowing about a previous accident is a stronger deterrent to unsafe work practices among this year's group of workers.
- According to those surveyed, education and training are the keys to preventing occupational disease and injuries among young workers. This conviction is even stronger compared to previous surveys.

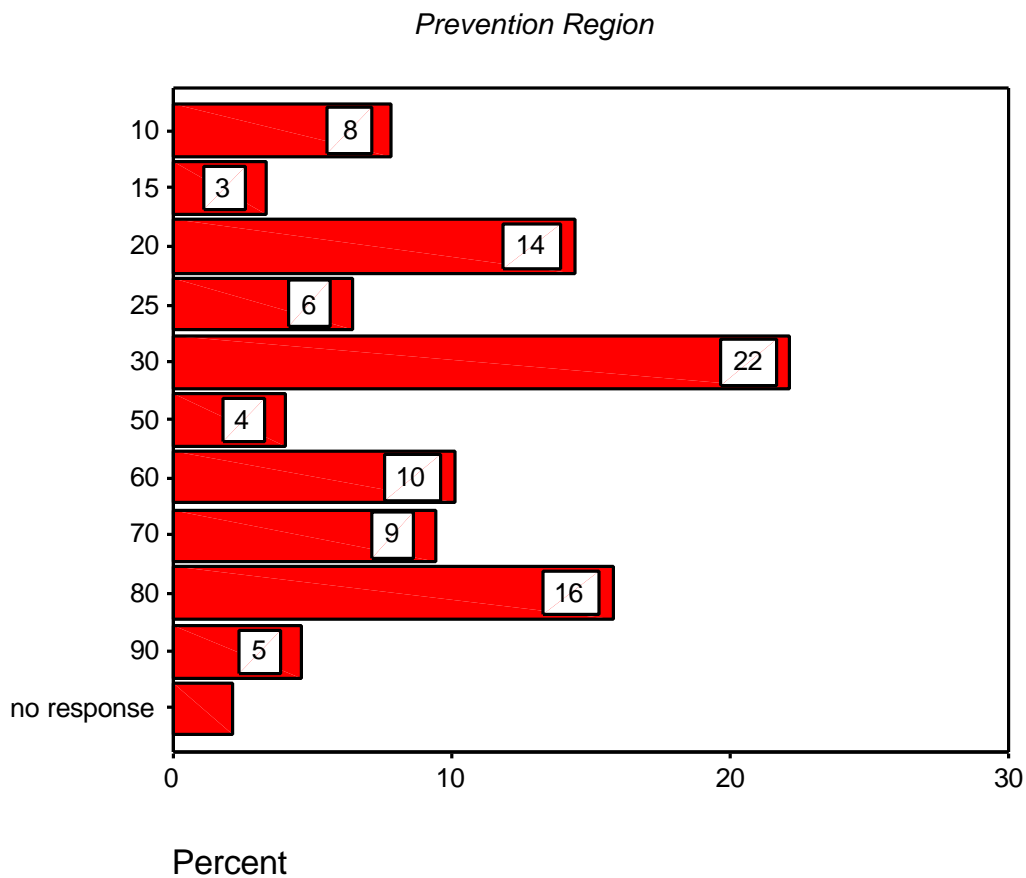
Data Interpretation Cautions:

- Participants were not randomly selected; therefore survey findings cannot be generalized to all young workers in all industries. For example, male respondents are over-represented compared to the statistical average of BC's labour force. Therefore, opinions cannot be representative of young workers as a whole.
- Some industries may be over or under represented, compared to the sectors in which young workers are predominantly employed.
- Detailed written responses have yet to be analyzed for patterns of responses.

SELECTED SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

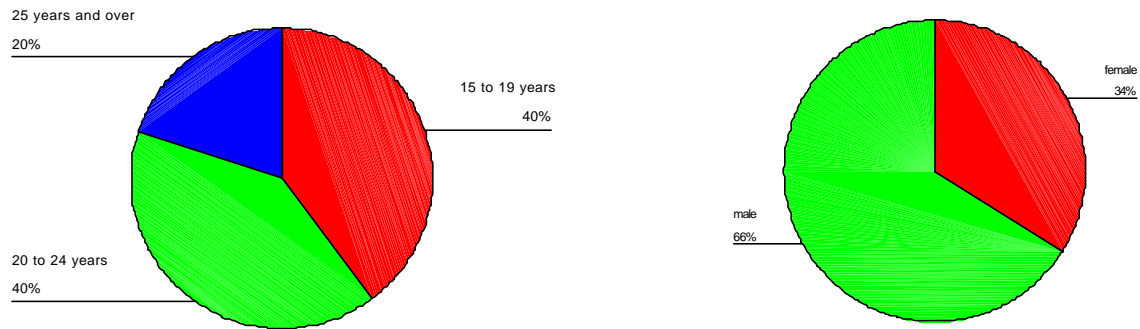
- A total of 1,111 Young Worker Officer Survey Blitz questionnaires were analyzed as part of a yearly Regional Services initiative.¹ Survey participants are young workers between the ages of 15 and 24 years.
- The highest proportion of surveys are from the three regions: Surrey/Abbotsford (30) – 22%, Courtenay/Campbell River/Terrace (80) – 16%, and Burnaby/Coquitlam (20) – 14%. The breakdown of surveys for all Prevention Regions² is as follows:



¹ Note: A total of 8 surveys were excluded from the analysis for various reasons (i.e. spoiled responses).

² Prevention Regions are as follows: Vancouver South (10), Vancouver Centre/North (15), Burnaby/Coquitlam (20), Richmond/Delta (25), Surrey/Abbotsford (30), Northern BC (50), Central Interior (60), Vancouver Island South (70), Courtenay/Campbell River/Terrace (80), and South Okanagan/Kootenay (90).

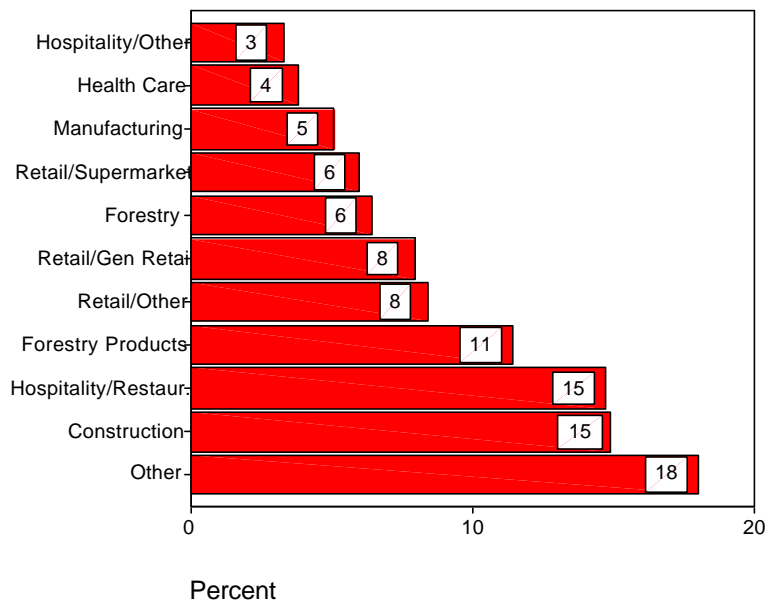
- The age and gender breakdown of survey respondents are given in the charts below.



Note that the gender breakdown of respondents is not reflective of BC's labour force, where there is a fairly even split among young male and female workers aged 15 to 24 years. One possible explanation for this is that 20% of the sample consisted of workers over the age of 25 years, a group not intended to be part of the survey sample. In BC, there are slightly more male than female workers between the ages of 25 to 44 years. Also, the survey sample was non-scientific.

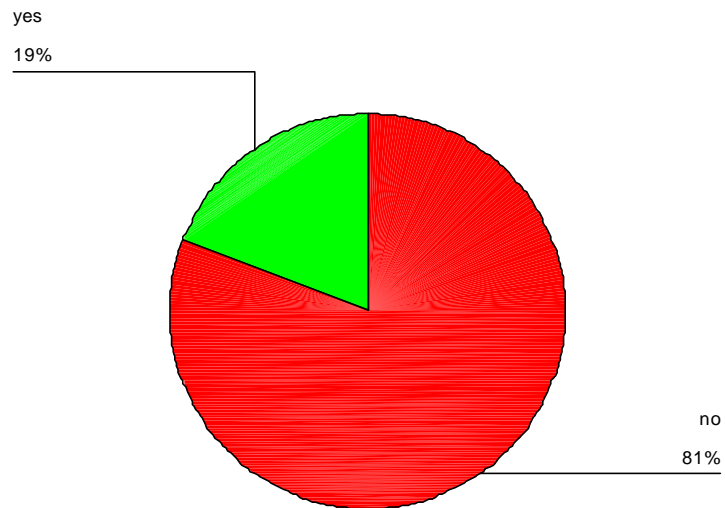
- Of those surveyed, a majority work in the construction industry, the hospitality/restaurant sector, or in forest products manufacturing (total = 41%). Almost 20% of those surveyed work in industries other than ones defined in the survey (see industry groupings in chart below), with most indicating either warehousing or fish processing as their industry.

Worker's Industry



- Most survey respondents have worked at more than one job. For those who responded to the question (N=1094), only 19% are in their first paid job.

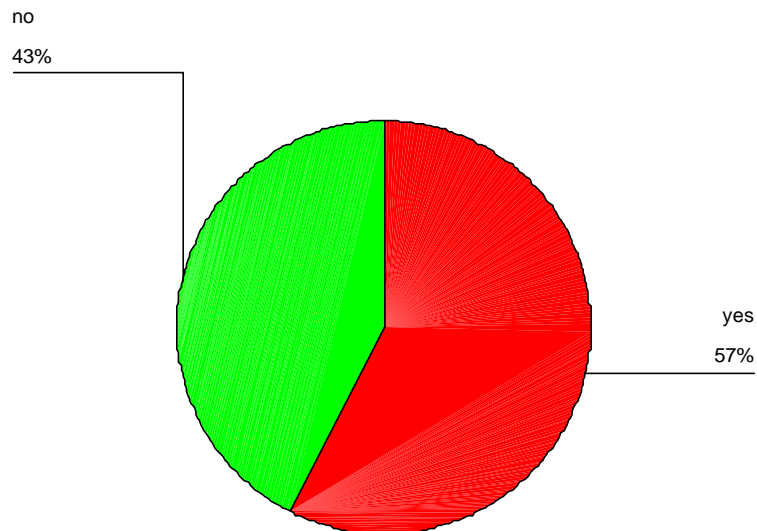
Is this your first paid job in the workforce?



Survey Findings

Did you receive any safety training at school?

- Just under half of all respondents to whom the question applied have not received health and safety training at school (N=1075).



If yes, training was received from?

- Respondents indicated that they received health and safety training from the following individuals in a school setting, where respondents could choose more than one option:

	Frequency	Percent
CAPP Coordinator	240	38%
Shops Instructor	240	38%
Regular Classroom Teacher	169	27%
Trades Instructor	102	16%
WCB Officer	92	15%
Technical Skills Instructor	72	11%
Arts Instructor	31	5%

N=630

As can be seen, health and safety training, when received at school, is most often delivered by a CAPP Coordinator or a Shops Instructor.

Any comments on the above in terms of its usefulness?

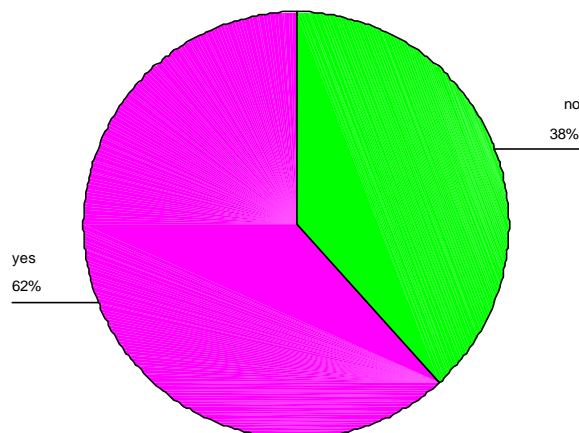
- Of the workers who received workplace health and safety training in their school setting, most found it to be of use, and some experienced an increase in their awareness of health and safety thanks to the training. Based on further analysis, the source of the instruction does not seem to influence its perceived utility.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Found the training useful	430	68%
Increased awareness of health & safety	255	41%
Worker took specific courses	47	7%

N=628

Did you receive any safety training at any other previous job?

- Of those respondents who had previous paid work experience, most had already received on-the-job health and safety training.



What kind of safety training did you receive?

- Of those who received previous training, most were shown the location of emergency equipment or taught some or all aspects of fire safety. Slightly more than half received WHIMIS training or were shown safety procedures.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Location of emergency equipment	498	62%
Fire safety/drill/fire extinguisher use	454	57%
WHIMIS training	422	53%
Seminar	422	53%
Safety procedures	412	51%
First aid	387	48%
Video/book/pamphlet	312	39%
Food safety	268	33%
Emergency/accident simulation	268	33%
General awareness seminar	265	33%
Other (for example, fall protection, safe lifting techniques, and so forth)	49	6%

N=802

Who would you speak to about a hazardous workplace situation?

- Respondents answered “yes” in the following order of frequency to the options provided below:

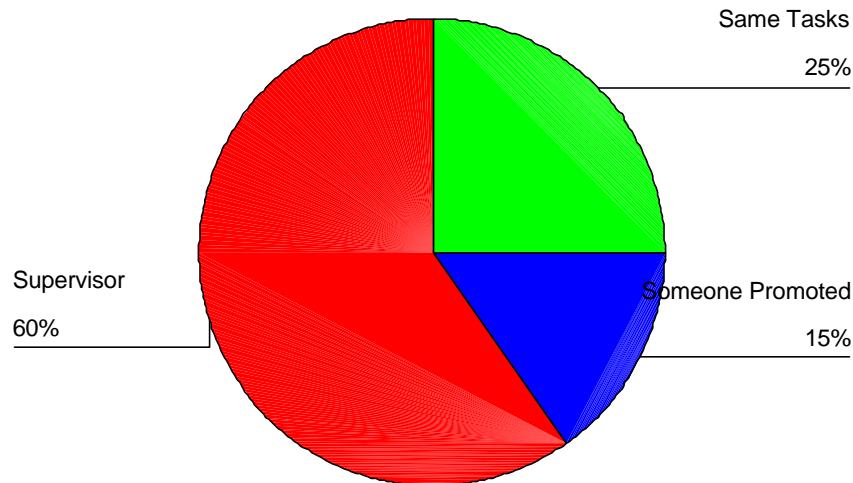
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Supervisor	958	87%
More experienced co-worker	279	25%
WCB	200	18%
A co-worker your age	144	13%
Parent	85	8%
Other (first aid officer, safety committee rep and so forth)	65	6%
Friends outside work	53	5%
No one	15	1%

N=1095

The survey results echo previous findings showing young workers’ marked preference for approaching supervisors about hazardous workplace situations.

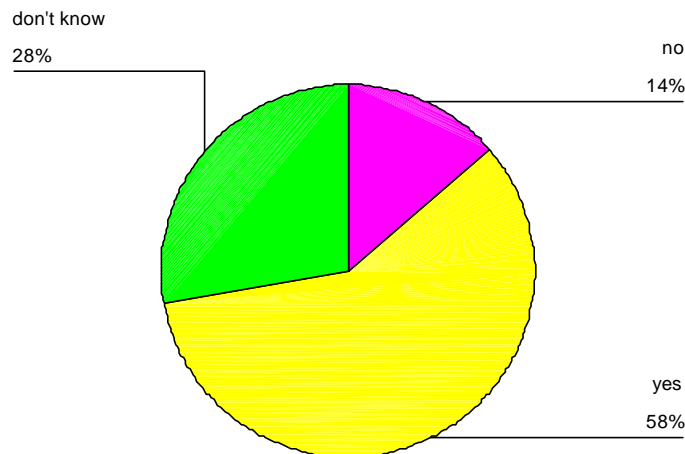
Who would you most like to receive safety training from?

- Most survey participants would prefer to receive health and safety training from their supervisor (N=976). This result confirms previous survey findings.



If you refuse to perform unsafe tasks or work in unsafe conditions, are you protected from being fired or punished by your employer?

- There still appears to be some confusion among young workers concerning their workplace health and safety rights. Just under half of respondents (42%) either don't know or don't think that they are protected from being fired or punished if they refuse to work in unsafe conditions.



Why do you think young workers are injured on the job more often than older workers?

- Inexperience is the most common reason cited for the higher-than-average injury rate among young workers.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Inexperience	874	79%
Lack of training	584	53%
Lack of awareness about hazards	562	51%
Lack of attention	448	41%
Don't follow safety procedures	435	39%
Invincible	296	27%
Other (fear of speaking up, over-confident, and so forth)	86	8%

N=1105

Which one thing is the most effective in preventing occupational disease and injuries among young workers?

- Education and awareness about workplace health and safety (57%) is by far the most popular choice for what respondents believe would be most effective in preventing occupational disease and injuries among young workers.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Education and awareness about workplace health and safety	624	57%
Training workers in solving health and safety issues	304	28%
Stronger enforcement of workplace health and safety requirements	170	15%
Involve workers in solving health and safety issues	146	13%
Develop safer work procedures	114	10%
Develop safer equipment	70	6%

N=1097

When you think back to a previous job, what is the best piece of advice you received from a supervisor or co-worker about safety in your workplace?

- Asking questions is chosen most often as the “best piece of advice” ever received from a supervisor or co-worker about safety in the workplace (62%). This finding complements the belief among respondents that inexperience is the largest contributor to young worker workplace accidents.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Ask questions	665	62%
Pay attention	459	43%
Do not rush	451	42%
Use equipment safely and properly	411	38%
Report safety hazards immediately	332	31%
Follow safe work policy	328	31%
Other	54	5%

N=1074

What would you like to have been told about workplace health and safety on the first day of your first job?

- Two thirds of those surveyed would have appreciated being warned about potential workplace dangers on their first paid work day.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Where/what dangers to be aware of	708	66%
Orientation/safety rules and procedures	503	46%
Safety hazards of specific job/equipment	494	45%
Location/use of safety equipment	485	44%
More information about health and safety	172	16%
Other	52	5%

N=1095

If you could tell WCB one thing that they could do to make work safer for young and new workers what would it be?

- Respondents tend to favour training and education as strategies for making the workplace safer for young workers.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Provide training/education/orientation	635	58%
Enforce/ensure workers to follow safety procedures	400	36%
Provide more/frequent training and education	351	32%
Provide more workplace health and safety training in school	339	31%
WCB should provide safety materials	206	19%
Other	65	6%

N=1099

What would convince you to work safer?

- Almost half of those surveyed say they don't need convincing when it comes to working more safely. Knowledge of a previous workplace accident also acts as a deterrent.

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Already convinced	519	47%
Knowledge of previous accident by worker	477	43%
Experience an accident (either self or other)	379	35%
Awareness of consequences to co-workers, self, and family	347	32%
Reminders at work (posters, etc.)	280	26%
Other	39	4%

N=1098

Think about a supervisor you had at a previous job. Do you agree or disagree that each of the following words or phrases described that person.

- Based on the experience of respondents, supervisors are least likely to train workers to be safe, keep workers informed of safety rules, or praise safe work behaviours.

	Average	S.D.
Praised safe work behaviours	2.71	1.28
Encouraged safe behaviours	2.55	1.31
Kept workers informed of safety rules	2.70	1.30
Rewarded safe behaviour	3.13	1.32
Involved workers in setting safety goals	3.15	1.29
Discussed safety issues with others	2.82	1.28
Updated safety rules	2.88	1.32
Trained workers to be safe	2.64	1.36
Enforced safety rules	2.73	1.30
Acted on safety suggestions	2.79	1.32

N=1013 to 1025