

Your Teen at Work

Tips for... **Parents**



Remind your children that by law they have **basic rights**, including:

1. The **Right to Know** what hazards there are in their workplace and what to do to prevent injuries from those hazards.
2. The **Right to Participate** in health and safety activities in their workplace without fear of discipline.
3. The **Right to Refuse** work that they reasonably believe can be dangerous to themselves or others.

They also have **responsibilities**, including:

1. **Work Safely:** they must use all machinery and equipment the way they were trained, and in a proper way.
2. **Report Hazards:** if they know Ontario's health and safety laws are not being followed, or they suspect a hazard, they must report the circumstances to their supervisor or employer as soon as possible.
3. **Use or Wear Protective Devices:** they must not remove a guard or device designed to protect them. Tell them to wear their safety gear – it's the law!

Who's looking after your children now?

Remember how carefully you looked after your children when they were small – making sure they were buckled into a car seat properly, that they wore their helmets when biking or roller-blading, that they got enough rest and ate properly, that they didn't talk to strangers?

Those children currently have jobs, or will have shortly. **Who's making sure they're safe now?**

Most parents don't realize the need to be concerned about health and safety in the workplace, because they assume their children will be safe at work or that someone is looking out for them.

Most teenagers are eager to get out into the work world and earn some money. They have a lot to offer but, realistically, they are new, inexperienced and anxious to please.

For this reason, they may be hesitant to ask questions on the job, and fear being looked upon as being "stupid."



Start talking to your teens about job safety when they start looking for work. Encourage them to ask about safety procedures when they go to a job interview.

Tell them they should expect to get safety training when they start a new job and shouldn't be afraid to walk away from a job if they feel they won't be safe.

Remind them that *no* job or rate of pay is worth

being injured for. Fingers, eyes and your life cannot be replaced. New jobs can always be found.

If your teenagers are already working, it's important to find out as much as possible about the conditions in which they work.

Talk to them about their jobs – not just the pay and benefits, but about the actual tasks they take on. Use your built-in parent radar to detect potential risks and ask about how safety is handled on the job.

Help prevent workplace injuries. Let your teens know that you want them to say "no" to unsafe work and that you'll support them in that decision. As the saying goes – better safe than sorry!

Many parents assume their teen

... works in a safe environment

You should know that every year from 2003 to 2007, Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board received around 50,000 claims from young workers age 24 and under injured on the job. In the same five-year period, a total of 43 young workers died as a result of workplace injuries.

Source: Workplace Safety & Insurance Board

... has received proper health and safety training from their employer

The only way for you to really know is to ask your child directly. 56% of young workers surveyed reported that they had not received any training before taking on a new task.

Source: Industrial Accident Prevention Association

... will tell them if they think their workplace is unsafe

Young workers are usually afraid to speak up; they fear their parents' interference may jeopardize their jobs. Encourage them to talk to their supervisor and health and safety representative.



... Your Teen At Work



No job is worth your child's life!

For more information for parents about the law and safety for young workers, go to:

www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca
and
www.youngworker.ca

If you need help with a concern about safety in your teen's workplace, call the local office of the Ontario Ministry of Labour (listed in the blue pages of your phone book) or 1-800-268-8013.

You send your teenagers to driving school to become safer, smarter drivers, so why not give them the same advantage in the workplace? A lifetime Passport to Safety membership provides a standardized safety test, a nationally recognized safety transcript for young workers to attach to their résumés, and 24/7 access to workplace safety resources. Find out more about it at: www.passporttosafety.com

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Tips for Parents

Questions to ask your teen:

- Was safety orientation training and information on rules of the workplace provided by your boss?
- Does your supervisor work in or near your work area?
- Does your supervisor provide on-the-job performance feedback, including information and advice on how to work safely?
- Do you report concerns to your supervisor and do you feel comfortable doing so?
- What tasks do you normally perform at work?
Familiarize yourself with the place they work, the people and the jobs they perform. Ask around and make sure you're comfortable that it's a safe place to be. (You wouldn't be the first parent to show up at your teen's workplace!)
- Are you tired at work?
Keep an eye on the balance in your teenager's life. It's a fact that teens develop cognitively and physically into their early 20s, so they have an increased need for sleep. A hurried cycle of full-time school, homework, social life and work (especially more than a few hours on the weekend) combined with a lack of rest can create fatigue, leading to poor performance in school and an increased risk of injury at work and while driving.
- Do you have to climb or work at heights? Do you lift and carry heavy objects?
If the answer is yes, ask how they were trained and what equipment they use to do these things safely.
- Do you know what kind of protective equipment to wear and have you been trained to use it properly?
You wouldn't let your kids out the door to play hockey without full gear, so don't let them go to work without any safety equipment the employer requires them to wear or bring to work (safety shoes, protective eyewear, a hairnet).
- Do you work with chemicals? Have you received training in their proper use?
WHMIS training must be provided to workers using chemicals. Ask if they know about labels and material safety data sheets.
- Do you know that it is important for you to report to your supervisor any injury you receive?
If your teen is injured on the job, know that compensation for injured workers isn't only for older workers. Check with the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board at www.wsib.on.ca or 1-800-387-0750 to find out about your teen's rights.

Age does matter...

Minimum Age Requirements for Working in Ontario	
14 years old	Establishments such as offices, stores, arenas, and restaurant serving areas.
15 years old	Factories (other than logging operations), restaurant kitchens and warehouses.
16 years old	Construction, a surface mine (except the working face); logging operations; mining plants.
18 years old	Underground mining or a working face of a surface mine; window cleaning.