

Employing Young Workers

Tips for... Supervisors



Remember your first few days on the job?

How much did you know then?

How much were you taught by your supervisor?

Legislation

Section 27 of Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) outlines your duties as a supervisor.

The law says that you, as a supervisor, must:

1. Ensure that your workers work in accordance with the provisions of the OHSA and its Regulations.
2. Ensure that your workers use protective devices and wear the required personal protective equipment.
3. Let your workers know about any potential or actual dangers in the workplace that you are aware of.
4. If required by a regulation made under the OHSA, provide your workers with written instructions where necessary to protect them.
5. Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of your workers.

Did You Know ?

- ... that every year from 2003 to 2007, around 50,000 young workers age 15 to 24 reported injuries to Ontario's WSIB? *
- ... that young workers are 24% more likely to be injured on the job than other groups, particularly during the first few days of employment? *
- ... that young workers often are unable to recognize hazards?
- ... that young workers tend not to ask questions because they don't want to look "stupid"?
- ... that young workers are an asset to your workplace – with fresh eyes, new ideas and good questions to ask?
- ... that young workers are easier to train and eager to work?
- ... that, as a supervisor, you are legally responsible for your workers?
- ... that Ontario students are learning about their workplace rights and responsibilities?
- ... that if you fail to comply with the OHSA, you could be subject to a fine or jail term?

* Source: Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB)

Here's What You Need To Do...

- Spend more time explaining the job, providing training and supervising young and new workers.
- Set and explain safety rules and ensure *everyone* follows them.
- Ensure all hazards are explained and complete job-specific safety training is provided before the work is assigned.
- Explain the importance of prompt reporting of unsafe conditions and health and safety concerns. Ensure they know it is a priority for you and tell them how to report the hazard so you can act on it immediately.
- Make yourself available to answer questions and provide advice.
- Lead by example: wear required protective devices and always reinforce safety on the job.
- Establish and maintain open lines of communication.



Source: Knox, A.B. *Helping Adults Learn*

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Starting Points...

This list, though not comprehensive, outlines information you should cover with your young workers.

- Everyone is entitled to work in a healthy and safe work environment.
- Everyone has the responsibility to contribute to making and keeping the workplace safe.
- Emergency procedures, including the location of fire exits, extinguishers and eye wash stations.
- How and when to use personal protective equipment.
- Your company's health and safety rules.
- Correct lifting techniques.
- Good housekeeping practices.

Training Techniques:

- Because people learn differently, use a variety of training techniques with your young workers.
- Guide your young workers through resources for health and safety information.
- Schedule sufficient time in the appropriate learning environment.
- Be hands-on, evaluate their learning and give them feedback.

Discuss:

- Asking for help when they are unsure.
- Proper equipment operation including the mandatory use of guards and lock-out systems.

Bright Ideas

- Host a new worker welcoming get-together to celebrate their arrival.
- Give a guided tour of the entire workplace.
- Introduce new young workers to key people in the organization. This may include the Health and Safety Manager, Health and Safety Committee members or Health and Safety Representatives.
- Use articles and other information about workplace injuries and deaths that have occurred in other workplaces to reinforce the health and safety message.
- Continually reinforce the importance of health and safety.
- Put stickers on equipment warning young workers they shouldn't use it without training or supervision.
- Pair up your young workers with experienced, safety-conscious workers.
- Review other tip sheets in this series, such as "Employing Young Workers – Tips for Employers."
- Recognize safe work practices and if safety rules are not observed, find out why.

Bottom Line

YOU have direct responsibility for the safety of your workers, but also a unique opportunity to be a role model for young workers just starting out. Be a part of creating tomorrow's safe and healthy workforce.

Are you a new supervisor?

Get training in Ontario's safety legislation and dangers in your workplace. The OHSA requires employers to appoint competent supervisors: knowledgeable about the work and safety on the job.

For general requirements for worker orientation see the WSIB Orientation Series "Launching A Safe Start," which can be ordered by phoning the WSIB Prevention Hotline at 1-800-663-6639.

For more information about young workers go to www.youngworker.ca or www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca

Produced by the Ontario Ministry of Labour

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