



International
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Organization

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SAFETY AND HEALTH

FACTSHEET FOR
YOUNG WORKERS



YOUTH
4OSH

Are you between **15-24 years old** and work before or after school hours, during weekends or holidays, or in an apprenticeship or internship? Or have you finished school and started your working life, or help with a family enterprise? Or are you self-employed?

IF SO, THIS FACT SHEET IS FOR YOU!

Did you know that young workers are more prone to workplace injuries and ill health than adults? Exposure to most workplace hazards can be easily prevented, and the more you know about these hazards and safe systems of work, the less likely you are to be injured.

The more you know about safe practices and your legal rights, the more likely you are to have a positive job experience and the less likely to be injured at work.

International and national laws require employers to provide a safe workplace and working conditions, including assigning you work that is suitable for your age and experience.



AS A WORKER, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO

- ☐ Receive proper training and information on safety and health hazards and risk control measures
- ☐ Be provided with, when required, personal protective equipment (PPE), such as helmets, gloves, masks or goggles (free of charge)
- ☐ Remove yourself from imminent danger to life and health
- ☐ Work in a job free of harassment and abuse
- ☐ Ask questions and ask for help



SPECIAL PROTECTION FOR YOUNG WORKERS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

As a young worker under 18, you should not carry out any work that is, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. For example, you should not:

- ☐ Work alone, long hours or at night
- ☐ Work in conditions of extreme cold or heat
- ☐ Work near or with hazardous chemicals
- ☐ Lift heavy items or carry loads for long distances
- ☐ Work on high structures or on equipment from which you might fall
- ☐ Use dangerous machinery and equipment such as saws or tractors
- ☐ Work underground, in water, underwater, or other confined spaces
- ☐ Undertake any other task that might harm your health, safety or morals.



HOW TO STAY SAFE AT WORK

Once you have received training on safe work practices, it is important that you comply with this training and take a shared responsibility for your own safety and health by ensuring, amongst other things, that you:

- ☐ Stay focused on your work. If you feel tired or distracted, take a short pause and restart your duties
- ☐ Perform your job duties as agreed
- ☐ Keep the workplace neat, tidy and free of clutter
- ☐ Always use the PPE given to you by your employer
- ☐ Be careful and diligent in your work
- ☐ Don't drink alcohol and don't take drugs. These substances decrease your concentration and response capacity.

It is your employer’s responsibility to make sure that the workplace is safe, but it is also your responsibility to inform them about any dangers you identify.

Report any safety and health issues, e.g., if one of your tools is damaged. Seek help if your supervisor refuses to listen to you if you report an unsafe condition (see the section on “What If I have a safety problem?” for more information). If you believe your work activity presents an imminent and serious danger to your life or health, and to those of other workers, you are entitled to refuse to perform the work. You must notify your employer of such a refusal, but in doing so you are protected by the law from reprisal by your employer.



**ASK FOR HELP AND ADVICE -
SILENCE IN THE WORKPLACE
CAN LEAD TO DANGER**

Do not be afraid to ask for help or advice if you do not understand the instructions given to you or if you have safety concerns.

In particular your employer should adopt the approach “Tell me, show me, watch me” when assigning you a new task:

TELL ME _____

The employer should give you a clear and detailed explanation of the task, paying particular attention to critical elements and documented procedures.

SHOW ME _____

The employer should demonstrate the task, explaining such key points as how a machine is guarded and how to operate the equipment. You should subsequently be asked questions to make sure you have understood.

WATCH ME _____

The employer should watch you performing the task and provide you with clear and constructive feedback to check that you have understood the safe system of work to be followed.



**THE HAZARDS YOU SHOULD
WATCH OUT FOR**

Every job has its intrinsic hazards and it is important to be aware of them. Some hazards are obvious and may have immediate consequences, such as falling off a ladder, getting hurt by machinery or being cut by a knife; but there are also dangers that may only affect you after some time, such as noise, chemical exposure and lifting heavy objects in the wrong way.

***Hazards to be watched out for in construction,
manufacturing and agriculture***

Slips, trips and falls, hazardous machinery and tools, heatstroke and other health issues linked to weather conditions, manual lifting, carrying and handling are hazards common to all three industries. There are some specific work activities that may present increased risks if safe systems of work are not followed:

CONSTRUCTION	MANUFACTURING	AGRICULTURE
Working at height	Working with sharp objects	Using machinery and tools
Working with electricity	Working in a room that is too warm	Using pesticides and other agrochemicals
Working in a dusty environment	Conducting repetitive tasks	Working with sharp objects
Conducting repetitive tasks	Using chemicals	Working with animals
Working below ground or near excavations	Working with electricity	
Exposure to chemicals, asbestos and radiation		

WHAT IF I GET HURT ON THE JOB?

- ❑ Tell your supervisor or your manager right away
- ❑ If necessary, go to a clinic or doctor right away
- ❑ Inform your parent or another family member



WHAT IF I HAVE A SAFETY PROBLEM?

If you disagree about any aspect relating to your safety and health, always try to discuss it with your supervisor or manager first. If there is a shop steward, a workplace safety and health representative or a workers' representative, you may also turn to them for help. You can also ask your parents for help.

If the matter cannot be resolved, turn to the relevant sectoral/national trade union(s) or public authorities for help. These may include: a hotline or specific occupational safety and health (OSH) department in your Ministry of Labour, your labour inspectorate, your social security institution, etc.



LEGISLATION IN YOUR COUNTRY

The purpose of workplace health and safety legislation is to protect workers against hazards on the job. Legislation outlines the general rights and responsibilities of your employer and your supervisor, as well as the rights and responsibilities that you have. OSH legislation may be found in your national Labour Code and/or in specific OSH laws and regulations.

MY NOTES

