

Working **Y**outh

age 14 - 18

Factory work is often a pathway to success. More and more international companies are opening up factories in new areas, creating new jobs and new opportunities to gain skills and experience. As a worker in a garment factory you may be cutting cloth, moving the cloth and other materials from place to place, sewing by hand or on machine, checking garments or packing the finished products. This can be good and decent work, but there are always things that can hurt you or make you sick. Your employer is responsible for providing a safe workplace, but it is wise for you to know the dangers and what to do about them.

The top 3 dangers for youth



- Working long hours, in the same position, sometimes into the night



- Lifting things which are too heavy for you



- Fast, repetitive movement

GARMENT FACTORY

What YOU should do to stay safe on the job

Know the law

The rule is: No one under 18 should do hazardous work!
(*Insert country name*) has a law to protect young workers.
The law says:

(*insert key points from the law that address: age, hours, tasks that are off limits*)

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Get trained

Your boss is responsible for seeing that you are properly trained to do every task that's part of your job and for showing you hazards to watch out for. You should be trained to handle cleaning products safely, proper lifting methods, the right way to use and store equipment, and what to do if there is an emergency such as a fire, robbery, or abuse. Do not be shy if you are not sure how to do something—ask!

Be careful; be proud

You have a job. You are helping your family. You deserve respect from clients and co-workers.

If something seems unsafe, ask about it.

If someone bothers or threatens you, ask for help. Keep your eyes open for dangers.

Remember, it is your employer's responsibility to provide a safe workplace. It is **your** responsibility to follow instructions and safety rules carefully.

What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Make sure there is good ventilation, e.g. one that sucks dust out
- Make sure all equipment is safe; enclose all moving parts so young workers cannot get their clothes, hair, or hands caught. Enclose noisy equipment.
- Provide carts or trolleys for moving cloth, finished goods, and equipment
- Use fabric that is not treated with dangerous chemicals like formaldehyde
- Provide contracts for all young workers and not let them work overtime or without breaks

TRUE STORIES

Many young workers work in small or large garment factories. This work can be tiring and stressful. There are many safety problems to watch out for. Find out what to do so you do not get hurt, like these young workers did....

"I work in a factory that makes blue jeans. When I come home from work, I am covered with blue dust, and cough up blue mucous. My nose is always stuffed up and I never seem to stop coughing."

"I run a sewing machine all day, sitting on a hard stool. After a few hours, my leg starts to feel numb from pressing the foot pedal. My neck hurts all the time from bending over the machine. I don't know how long I can do this job."

"I am the person who removes spots from the finished shirts. I use a cleaning chemical, but I don't know what it is. There are ten of us in a small room—I usually have a headache from the chemical smell by the end of the day."

Some other dangers and what to do about them

BODY STRAIN

- Use mechanical lifting equipment or trolleys to move heavy items.
- Get help when lifting heavy items.
- Remember "SLIM" (Safe Lifting Methods)

Squat to pick up the object and lift using your leg muscles not your back

Lean close, keeping the heavy item against your body

Move your feet to turn, do not twist your body

- Find a comfortable position to work in. Change your position during the day.
- Use a seat that is the right height. Add cushions or a footrest if it is not adjustable.
- Take regular rest breaks, even short ones, to stretch your body.
- Set up your work station so that everything is at elbow level and easy to reach.
- Stand on a mat. Even cardboard will help.
- Change position, move around, or shift weight from one foot to the other.

MACHINE INJURIES

- Use metal mesh gloves when you work with cutting tools. Your boss should provide these.
- Wear clothes that are not too loose because they can get caught in moving parts of the machines.

FALLS

- Remove items cluttering the floor in your work areas or walk ways.
- Never run or move too fast.

- Do not carry items too tall for you to see over.
- Wear shoes with non-skid soles.

DUST

- If the work is very dusty, use a dust mask provided by your employer.
- Clean up dusty areas regularly, with a wet mop if possible.

ELECTRIC SHOCK

- Do not touch or use a machine that looks damaged or is wet. Tell your boss or supervisor about it.

HARASSMENT

- If you are being repeatedly yelled at or harassed, get help from a worker rep.
- If someone demands sexual favours, call a co-worker and inform your boss

NOISE

- If there is so much noise that you need to shout to be heard, your hearing can be damaged. Wear ear plugs or other hearing protection provided by your boss.

HEAT & ILLNESS

- Drink a lot of water. Take rest breaks out of the heat.
- If you start to feel dizzy or sick to your stomach, tell a co-worker. If possible, get out of the heat, drink water, and put water on your head and arms to cool down.
- Wash your hands with soap before eating and drinking.

If you need help or more information, contact:

Name and address of distributing agency here

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