

Working **Y**outh

age 14 - 18

Furniture-making is a good trade to learn as there is increasing demand for well-made wooden products. Carpenters can produce furniture (such as chairs, tables, shelves, benches etc.), building components (doors, windows, frames, blinds etc.), and other goods (fences, woodcarving etc.). As a young worker, you might do sawing, cutting, sanding, caulking and treating the wood with preservatives, varnishes, or paints. You should know that a lot of tasks in woodworking and furniture-making are not safe for you. For this reason, there are some rules and regulations prohibiting you from doing certain tasks. They are meant to keep you safe, healthy and productive so that you may become a skilled craftsperson in the future.

The top 3 dangers for youth



- Sharp hand tools (such as chisels and planes) and machinery (such as cutting and sawing machines) may cause serious injuries



- Exposure to hazardous chemicals (such as solvents, preservatives, insecticides and other chemicals used in woodwork industry) may cause poisoning



- Long hours of heavy work cause fatigue; fatigue causes injuries

WOOD-WORKING

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 or supervisor must train you to do every task that's part of your job, such as how to handle any chemicals you need to use, how to lift heavy things, or how to use cutting tools or equipment safely, and show you what might be harmful. 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

- Provide a large enough workplace and adequate facilities for the number of workers, equipment and types of work.
- Give adequate training and supervision to young workers before they start, as well as on-the-spot training and supervision whenever you try a new task or use a new piece of equipment.
- Explain how to maintain the equipment and materials so that they are always ready and safe to use.
- Prevent you from handling hazardous equipment/materials and from working under hazardous conditions.
- Provide a Material Safety Data Sheet for each of the chemicals used and first aid procedures in case of accidents and exposures.
- Provide a complete First Aid Kit with directions for use.
- Implement policies against harassment and apply strict sanctions when a problem arises.

TRUE STORIES

"It was my second week on the job. I tripped over some wood on the floor and sprained my wrist. I couldn't do any work for two weeks, and almost lost my job."

"I was trying out the electric saw one evening after everybody had left. Nobody had really trained me on it yet, but I thought I had a pretty good idea of how it worked. It jumped when I started sawing and I dropped it on the floor. It almost hit my leg."

"I hate to use the dust mask, and so when the boss isn't looking I take it off. Then I noticed that I was beginning to cough all the time."

Some other dangers and what to do about them

BACK PAIN

Lifting heavy loads – ergonomic hazard

- Follow safe procedures and postures when lifting or moving wood and other heavy loads

SPRAIN / CRAMP

Work position – ergonomic hazard

- Apply the “elbow rule” (arm is parallel to the work surface),
- Use seats with a back rest, arm rest and foot rest.
- Do not sit cross legged on the floor as you will bend your back

RESPIRATORY DISORDER

Wood dust – chemical hazard

- Wood dust may get into the lungs and cause asthma, irritation, and cancer
- Make sure there good ventilation and air circulation in the workplace

HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

Stress – psychological hazard

- Recognize forms of harassment and violence (physical, verbal, or visual)
- Keep good rapport with colleagues, control yourself when you are angry
- Keep in mind that you are there to work and develop yourself. If you are bored or upset, just think about your future

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Insects and rodents – biological hazards

- Do your part to keep your workplace clean, free from insects and rodents as they can be the carriers of some dangerous diseases
- Make sure that you help to keep the toilets and wash-up places clean
- Do not leave puddles, waste or litter in the workplace

INJURIES/WOUNDS

Sharp tools – physical hazards

- Do not use sharp tools unless necessary. Ask your employer or supervisor not to assign you tasks requiring the use of sharp tools

ELECTRIC SHOCK

Wire or cable without proper insulation – physical hazard

- Ask your supervisor to have the electric wires/cables checked continually and inform your supervisor if you find broken insulation.
- Cover broken/torn/worn insulation with insulating tape as a temporary measure before it is replaced

ACCIDENTS

Protective equipment – physical hazard

PPE, such as masks and gloves, have to be worn and maintained properly. Keep in mind that wearing PPE does not make you safe from hazards

If you need help or more information, contact:

Name and address of distributing agency here