



International  
Labour  
Organization

# My Guide to Safe Work

## For Young People in the Pacific



2015 European Year for Development

**Copyright © International Labour Organization 2015**  
**First published 2015**

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Permissions), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: [pubdroit@ilo.org](mailto:pubdroit@ilo.org). The International Labour Office welcomes such applications. Libraries, institutions and other users registered with reproduction rights organizations may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit [www.ifrro.org](http://www.ifrro.org) to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

---

**My Guide to Safe Work for Young People in the Pacific**, International Labour Organization, ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries, 2015, 54pp  
ISBN: 978-92-2-129666-9 (print), 978-92-2-129667-6 (web pdf)

*ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data*

---

#### **Acknowledgements**

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union (Tackling Child Labour through Education in Fiji). The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the ILO and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

ILO resources adapted to produce this publication include the ILO Safe Work Kit (2011) and Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do; (2011).

Adapted by Marie Jane Fatiaki (ILO Suva)

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them. Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval. ILO publications and electronic products can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address, or by email: [pubvente@ilo.org](mailto:pubvente@ilo.org)

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
<b>PART 1: PROTECTING YOUNG WORKERS!</b>	<b>3</b>
Young workers or child labourers?	3
Benefits of young workers	5
Signing a work contract	6
5 ways to stay safe at work!	7
What if you need more help?	15
Warning signs	16
<b>PART 2: KEEPING SAFE IN THE WORKPLACE!</b>	<b>17</b>
Agriculture	18
Car repair	21
Construction	24
Garment factory	27
Hotel cleaning	30
Housekeeper	33
Restaurant	36
Small factory	39
Store/shop	42
Wood working	45
<b>PART 3: MOVING HEAVY LOADS</b>	<b>48</b>
Correct handling techniques	59
Risk assessment	51

## FOREWORD

Young workers have a right to special protection. ILO Conventions and the laws in most countries require employers to provide a safe workplace and work that is safe for young workers.

Not all employers know about or follow these laws, and the laws are not always enforced. But it is important for young workers to know what their employer should provide.

It is the employer's responsibility to provide a safe work place. It is the young worker's responsibility to follow instructions and safety rules carefully!

**“My Guide to Safe Work for Young People in the Pacific”** has been adapted from the ILO's resources on hazardous child labour and the “Safe Work for Youth” resources for administrators, employers and young people about the occupational hazards and risks faced by young workers and what to do about them!

The guide looks at protecting young workers, safety issues for young workers in 10 different work sectors, and safety issues for young workers on moving heavy loads. It has been developed by the Tackling Child Labour through Education project, funded by the European Union.

## **PART 1: PROTECTING YOUNG WORKERS**

### **YOUNG WORKERS OR CHILD LABOURERS?**

The number of young people aged 15–17 engaged in unacceptable hazardous jobs has substantially increased over the past few years, in contrast with the overall decrease in child labour. In 2008, an estimated 62.5 million young people were engaged in hazardous work, compared to 51 million in 2004. This represents an increase of nearly 20 percent in a four-year time span.

Young people between 14 and 18 years are of common interest to both youth employment and child labour efforts. It is an important age group as it encompasses the transition from school-to-work, or from school-based education to vocational training. It is during these years that the foundation is laid for achieving decent work later in life.

Doing hazardous work in adolescence can create huge barriers – educational, physical, psychological, social – that impede a young person from competing successfully for good jobs in the future, and is one of the main ways in which child labour and youth employment are linked.

Children under the minimum age for work need to be taken away from the hazard and out of work as quickly as possible!

As young people are still in a stage of rapid growth and development they are less experienced and more vulnerable to exploitation, and are therefore more likely to be hurt or made ill from their job than are adult workers.

Even though these young people are over the minimum age (either 14 or 15 years depending on a country's laws) they are still considered "child labour" under ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 if the work they do is hazardous, or considered as a worst form of child labour. Their work could be considered legal if there was minimal risk or if young people were well-trained and well-protected from the hazards.

Sushila, 14 years old, works all day in the tobacco plantation and does not go to school.

Maya, 14 years old, helps her mother look after her younger brothers and sisters and also goes to school.

The work done by Maya is not necessarily harmful. It does not put her health in danger. She has time to attend school and play with her friends. Maya's work is not considered to be child labour.

Sushila, on the other hand, does not get the opportunity to play or to get a basic education because she works all day. The environment in which she works can seriously harm her health and development. Sushila's work is a form of child labour.

## **BENEFITS OF YOUNG WORKERS**

Young workers are great workers because they:

- are energetic
- learn fast
- have quick reflexes
- have good eyesight and hearing
- appreciate the chance to learn skills and are anxious to do well
- are enthusiastic with a great work ethic
- are full of new ideas to help businesses grow and improve
- adaptable and flexible, often able to work part-time or on weekends or outside school hours when full time workers are not required

**Young workers deserve special consideration because they are:**

- still growing and their organs, muscles, and bones are still developing
- more sensitive to certain chemicals, toxic fumes, or noise than adults
- quick to move — sometimes without thinking — and more likely to take risks
- less experienced and need supervision and training
- bored more easily and may let their attention wander

Although generally strong, smart and eager, young workers must be kept away from jobs or parts of the workshop where they will be put at risk. It's a fact! When young workers and adult workers are doing the same tasks, the young workers are more likely to get injured.

## **SIGNING A WORK CONTRACT**

Young workers should sign a written contract with employers and be sure they clearly understand its terms. Never rely on a verbal agreement. It is easy to forget what you have said and “agreed to”.

A written contract reduces conflicts and disputes at the work place and ensures the rights and obligations of young workers.

In order to avoid misunderstanding between the employer and the young employees, the contract must be clear and explicitly outline the rights and obligations of both.

### **The contract should include these ten points:**

1. Name
2. Age
3. Address
4. Place of work
5. Description of the job(s) to be done
6. Start date and duration (or end date, if time-limited)
7. Days per week and hours of work per day
8. Remuneration and when it will be paid
9. Benefits
10. Obligations



## 5 WAYS TO STAY SAFE AT WORK!

Are you a worker under 18 years of age? You may be legally old enough to work, but did you know that if the work or working conditions are dangerous, you could be considered a child labourer?

### True stories

When Fatima was 14, she got both arms caught in an ice-crushing machine. Now she is permanently disabled and will never have full use of her arms.

When Juan was 16, he was attacked and robbed at gunpoint at a food stall. He was working alone at midnight.

16 year old Rahul had a job making bricks. He was not told to use a mask, and after breathing the dust for several months, he now has a hard time breathing and gets sick a lot.

Anna is a 17 year old who works on a farm 40 hours a week. Her boss is always yelling at her to work faster. When she told him she was working as hard as she could, he fired her.

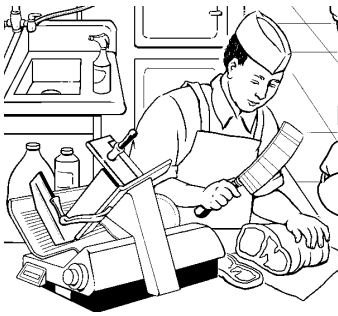
Follow these five steps to keep you safe in the workplace:

1. **Look for hazards**
2. **Know your rights**
3. **Get safety training**
4. **Follow safety rules**
5. **Ask questions/ get help**

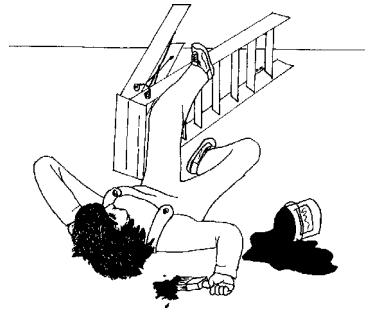
## 1. Look for hazards in your workplace

Be aware of the dangers on your job. Some of them may be obvious and can hurt you right away. Others may be “hidden” and might not make you sick until later.

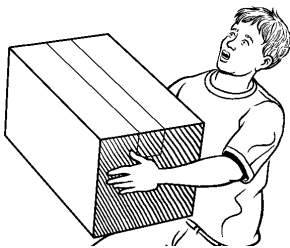
Think about some of the ways you might get hurt or become sick in your particular job.



Using knives, box cutters, or slicers can cause serious cuts



Working in high places can lead to falls



Lifting heavy objects can hurt your back



Working alone, especially at night, puts you at risk of harassment or attack

These are just examples. Every job has its own health and safety hazards. Learn to look for them, but remember, **it's your employer's responsibility to make sure your workplace is safe.**

## WHAT IS HAZARDOUS WORK?

According to the ILO Convention No. 182 it is: *“...work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children”* and includes:

- work on high structures (roofs, trees, walls) or on equipment where they might fall (ladders, scaffolding, steep slopes)
- work underground (caves, tunnels, pits)
- work in or under water (diving, standing in water or on damp ground for more than a few minutes)
- work in small spaces (tunnels, boxes, refrigerators)
- work alone away from others, or isolated from other young people
- lifting heavy items or carrying loads for long distances
- operating or working close to heavy or dangerous machinery, such as:
  - o equipment that cuts or crushes
  - o equipment that is motorized or powered by an engine
  - o machines that can trap the hand, foot, hair or a garment
- work for long hours or at night
- work with toxic chemicals or work close to where they are being used
- work in places where there is risk of attack going to and from work
- work demanding heavy responsibility for others' safety or goods

**There are many, many tasks that young workers can do and can do well. The challenge is to know where to draw the line.**

## 2. Know your rights

There are international guidelines and national laws that protect young workers. These say that your workplace must be safe. Young workers are **NOT** allowed to do work which is physically or psychologically dangerous. Laws also limit the hours and times of day that you can work in order that you have time for school and adequate rest. Your employer must follow these rules.

### How does your country's laws protect you?

#### **Extracts from the Fiji Employment Relations Promulgation, 2007**

##### ***Prohibition of worst forms of child labour***

91. The following forms of child labour are prohibited—

- (a) all forms of labour slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and any form of forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in relevant international treaties; or
- (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances, and a person who engages a child in such prohibited form of child labour commits an offence.

##### ***Minimum age for employment***

92. The age of 15 years is the minimum age for employment of children.

### ***Trade union rights***

94. A child who is 15 years or over has the right to join a trade union and to vote in a trade union elections where the child is a member.

### ***Certain restrictions on employment of children***

95.(1) A child must not be employed underground in a mine.

### ***Hours of work for children***

97.(1) A child must—

- (a) not be employed or permitted to be employed for more than 8 hours in a day; and
- (b) be given at least 30 minutes paid rest for every continuous 4 hours worked.

(2) A child must not be employed or permitted to be employed during a period when the child is required to attend school or for a period which prejudices the child's educational participation.

(3) Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to a child employed under a contract of apprenticeship lawfully entered into under the provisions of any written law.

### ***Conditions on night employment***

98. The Minister may, after consultation with the Board, by order in the Gazette, prescribe conditions for the employment of children between 6 o'clock in the afternoon of any day and 6 o'clock in the forenoon of the following day in a workplace.

**Extracts from the Employment Relations (Administration) Regulations 2008, Fiji**

**PART 8 – CHILDREN**

***Conditions of work***

40.- (1) A child must not be employed or permitted to be employed in any of the following situations:

- (a) in situations of direct hostilities;
  - (b) any work for which the child has little capacity;
  - (c) any work which is hazardous to the child's health, mental, spiritual or social development;
  - (d) in an environment which subjects the child to physical harm, psychological torture, any form of neglect, torture, any form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or which does not foster the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.
- (2) An employer who does not comply with sub regulation (1) commits an offence.

***Hours of work for children and night employment***

41.- (1) For the purposes of section 97 of the Promulgation, a child must not be employed for more than 8 hours during daylight hours.

- (2) Each child employed during daylight hours must be given a 30 minute paid lunch break.
- (3) For the purposes of section 98 of the Promulgation, no child may work beyond 10 pm at night.
- (4) Each child employed during night employment must be given a 30 minute paid dinner break within 2 hours of starting work.
- (5) No child may be employed for more than 8 hours per day.
- (6) Any employer who does not comply with this regulation commits an offence.

### 3. Get safety training

You should know how to do your job safely. Your boss should train you to do every task that's part of your job so you can do it without getting injured. For example, you should be shown how to:

- Handle properly any chemicals that are required for your job
- Lift heavy things in the right way
- Use knives, machetes, and other cutting tools safely
- Operate and clean tools and machines in a safe manner
- Wear safety glasses, gloves, and earplugs when needed
- Climb ladders safely
- Handle bullying or abuse by someone at work
- Respond to violent situations and robberies in a safe manner
- Know what to do when there is a fire or someone gets hurt

Keep yourself from getting hurt. Ask for more training! Always ask questions if you are not sure how to do something. If you do not get the training you need from your boss or supervisor, ask someone else. Ask a co-worker, union representative, teacher, or trainer.

***“I think I understand how to do this, but can you watch to make sure I’m doing everything right?”***

***“I’m still not sure how to do this. Can you show me once more?”***

#### 4. Follow safety rules

Once you have been trained, you need to keep your eyes open, follow all the safety rules, and report problems you see.

- Do every task safely, the way you have been trained
- Keep work areas clean and free from clutter
- Don't work after drinking alcohol or using drugs or when very tired
- Report any health and safety hazards to your boss

#### ***What if you get hurt on the job?***

- In an emergency, call 911 (Fiji)
- Tell your boss right away.
- Tell your parent or another family member.
- If necessary, go to a clinic or doctor right away.
- Go to the Ministry of Labour and report/ fill in the accident register.

#### 5. Ask questions and get help

If you think you might get hurt, ask for help. A good supervisor likes it when workers ask questions in a respectful way. Co-workers also may be able to help you.

***“These boxes are heavy and I don’t want to hurt my back. It would be safer and quicker if someone helps me lift them. I think my boss will approve if I show her that, not only will it protect me, but it will be faster which saves her money.”***

***“According to what I learned at school, I think I’m being asked to do tasks I am too young for. But I am afraid the manager will think I am lazy. I will ask one of the other workers for advice. “***



## WHAT IF YOU NEED MORE HELP?

If your boss does not help, or if you are afraid you will get fired or punished if you speak up you can:

- talk to one of the adult workers
- talk to a union representative
- talk to your parents, a teacher, or a community worker
- call or write to your Ministry of Labour!

### **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.

### ***Checklist for young workers***

- Do you use knives, machetes, or other cutting tools?
- Do you work in a very hot (or cold) place or with hot materials?
- Do you climb up trees, ladders or scaffolding?
- Do you lift heavy objects?
- Do you clean or work with machines or power tools?
- Do you breathe fumes from paints, cleaners, gasoline, or pesticides?
- Do you use computer keyboards for long periods?
- Do you work around loud machines?
- Do you pick crops for long periods?
- Do you work at a high rate of speed or do the same movement over and over?
- Do you ever get abuse or improper suggestions from customers or management?
- Do you usually work alone for long periods or at night?

## Warning Signs

Pay attention to signs that your workplace may be unsafe. There may be a problem if:

- Workers are getting hurt or sick
- There is no regular training programme
- Equipment is broken or electric cords are frayed
- Machines do not have safety guards
- Chemicals are stored in containers with no labels
- There is no posted policy against sexual harassment
- Workers are allowed to use shortcuts to save time
- Workplace is messy and the washrooms and toilets are dirty
- Floors are slippery
- The manager shouts at the workers

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

Sexual harassment is any kind of sexual conduct that is unwelcome and uninvited, and at work it involves:

- Requesting sexual favours in exchange for a job, or to keep a job, or to get good working conditions
- Invading personal space, that is, deliberately standing much closer to a person than they are comfortable with
- Brushing up against someone's body unnecessarily
- Touching, pinching, patting or fondling
- Making offensive hand and body gestures at someone
- Continually asking someone for a date when they have made it clear that they are not interested
- Whistling at women in the street and calling out/ making offensive comments to women

## PART 2: KEEPING SAFE IN THE WORKPLACE

1. AGRICULTURE
2. CAR REPAIR
3. CONSTRUCTION



*Exposure to hazards in the workplace can lead to serious illness.*



4. GARMENT FACTORY
5. HOTEL CLEANING
6. HOUSEKEEPER
7. RESTAURANT



8. SMALL FACTORY
9. STORE/ SHOP
10. WOOD WORKING



# AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the sector with the most child labourers. It is also the sector with the most potential for decent work for rural children and young adolescents who have reached the legal minimum age of employment. Although work in field and tree crops has a number of serious risks for children, we must not assume that these risks make the whole industry off-limits to children. Many types of farm work can be positive for children, providing them with experience and technical skills. It is important to discern which tasks, which working conditions, which products and which tools are hazardous and to help parents and policy-makers to take the necessary steps to protect children from those hazards.

## The top 4 dangers for youth



- Getting cut or injured by knives and heavy machinery
- Working long hours in extreme temperatures causing frostbite, sunstroke, dehydration
- Getting poisoned by exposure to pesticides, chemicals or bacteria
- Lifting things that are too heavy for you

## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Comply with labour laws on hours of work and ensure that there are adequate rest breaks after each 4 hours of work.

**Note: The Fiji hazardous child labour list prohibits children under 18 years from working in farming activities including but not limited to, sugarcane cutting, sugarcane loading and chemical spraying; and as workers on commercial vegetable farming!**

- Limit the carrying of heavy loads and working in extreme temperatures
- Have a rule against the use of heavy machinery and pesticides for young workers under 18 years
- Provide protective gear, including boots, for working out in the field during harvesting season or for preparing feed for farm animals
- Ensure there is a ready supply of clean drinking water, decent washing facilities and toilets.

### True stories

“Children cutting kale and collard greens in south- eastern Michigan showed us fresh cuts they got through their gloves. Robert L. [age 16], whose hands were laced with scars ... worked with a 6-inch knife. ‘You’re bound to get sliced,’ he said. Andrea C. [age 17] showed us two fresh punctures and said, ‘... Sometimes you’re going really fast and you don’t notice and ah!’”

“When I was 12 they gave me my first knife. Week after week I was cutting myself. Every week I had a new scar. My hands have a lot of stories.’ (Jose M., age 17, Saline, Michigan, August 24, 2009)”

Source: Human Rights Watch. 2010. Fields of peril: Child labor in US agriculture, Chapter VII (New York).

Losalini drives the motorbike on the family’s farm. She really likes riding it but has never been taught to drive it; she has just been doing it for years. Losalini often does farm jobs using the motorbike after she comes home from school. She works by herself. What are the risks that may lead to Losalini having an accident and injuring herself?

## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### STRAIN

Loading and carrying heavy loads causes joint and bone deformities; blistered hands and feet; lacerations; back injury and muscle injury

- Follow the correct lifting techniques
- Use wheel barrows to move objects
- Get help to lift or move loads

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

### FALLS

Climbing trees to harvest fruit or working at dangerous heights or slippery surfaces can cause broken bones, skull fractures and head injuries

- Make sure that the ladder used is stable
- Never run or move too fast
- Tools should be put away after use
- Put up danger signs where there are slippery surfaces

### CHEMICALS/ DUST

- Collecting, preparing, redistributing
- manure may result in bacterial and

parasitic infections and diseases, rashes and other forms of dermatitis, asthma and breathing difficulties and eye irritation

- Handling, mixing, spraying agrochemicals and other toxic chemicals is prohibited for workers under 18 years. Long term results include chemical poisoning, liver damage, nerve and neurological disorders, cancers and reproductive health disorders such as male and female infertility
- Young workers should not harvest tobacco/ handle tobacco leaves as this may result in poisonings, such as Green Tobacco Sickness

### MACHINE INJURIES

- Put up a sign listing the motorized farm tools that cannot be used by young workers
- Tell employer if there are tools in poor repair- the use of these tools should be avoided
- Be aware of the safety features of tools and machines.
- Do not touch electrical items that look damaged.
- Driving tractors or other farm machinery can result in severe injury or death from vehicle collision or overturned tractor. Do not stand close to moving part as this may result in lost finger or limb or pulled into or underneath machinery

## KEEPING SAFE IN THE WORKPLACE!

Almost every place has a repair shop or gas station with a mechanic who can fix motor vehicles.

You may start out as a helper, learning on the job about how to handle all kinds of problems. You may be changing tires, pumping gas, banging out dents, cleaning tools, spray-painting or working on the engine. It is a good job as there is always demand for a mechanic but there are also risks involved. Your employer is responsible for providing a safe workplace, but be smart: know the dangers and what to do about them.

### The top 3 dangers for youth



- Getting hit by moving equipment or a car slipping off its jack



- Getting bruised or cut by sharp tools, screws or metal parts



- Getting burned by hot metal

## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

Provide essential equipment (e.g. auto lifts) that is safe to use and is well-maintained

- Ventilate so that engine exhaust does not stay in the shop
- Provide young workers with protective gear, such as safety goggles, ear plugs, and gloves
- Provide training about the chemicals you will be using or switch to safer products
- Provide enough time for workers to clean up the workshop when work is finished
- Have a rule against violence and harassment of any kind on the premises where you work
- Have a first aid kit and an emergency plan in case you are hurt

### True stories

Michel worked in his uncle's auto shop. As the youngest one there, he ended up doing most of the cleaning. His uncle did not have any gloves for him, so every day he went home with rashes on his hands from the strong cleaning materials he had to use. He also had headaches every day.

When Akbar was working next to the grinder, a splinter of metal flew into his eye. It hurt terribly, and he rubbed his eye to try to get it out. His boss tried to flush it out with water, but in the end he had to go to the hospital to get it removed. He could not see in that eye or do his work for two weeks.

Jorge worked in a small motor vehicle repair shop. One day, he was lying under a truck repairing its rear brakes while it was parked on a slope outside the shop. The truck rolled backwards over him and crushed him. He died soon after.



## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### STRAIN

Injuries often happen when you lift, bend or reach for things that are too heavy

#### What you can do is....

- use mechanical lifting equipment to move heavy parts or ask someone to help you lift
- 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

### FALLS

Garage floors are often wet, greasy and cluttered

#### What you can do is....

- Help to keep the floor free of things that people might trip over
- Clean up spills immediately. If the liquid is greasy, use a grease-cutting cleaner
- Never run or move too fast. Use rubber-soled shoes if possible
- Do not carry items too high for you to see over.

### GETTING HIT

A car repair workshop has flying particles and lots of heavy items that can fall on you

#### What you can do is....

- Before getting under a car, make sure it cannot roll by putting blocks or chocks on the wheels, or if it is up on jacks, check again that the jacks are solid

- Wear safety glasses or face shields, provided by your boss, to protect you from flying sparks or slivers of metal when working near grinding or welding machines
- Wear strong shoes that are enclosed.  
Do not wear sandals.

### CHEMICALS FUMES DUST

Strong chemicals, dust, and fumes can hurt your skin, eyes, brain or lungs

#### What you can do is

- Check the label on chemicals you use (brake fluids, degreasers, lubricants) to see which are dangerous. Young workers are not allowed to use benzene
- Wear goggles and gloves provided by your boss and follow instructions carefully
- Brakes and clutches may contain asbestos (causes lung disease), so do not use compressed air for cleaning as it will scatter the dust. Use a wet mop.
- Carbon dioxide produced by engines can make you sick, so do not let them run too long inside the garage and keep doors and windows open
- Do not put a greasy/oily rag in your pocket (danger of testicular cancer)

### ELECTROCUTION

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

### 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.

# CONSTRUCTION

There are lots of jobs in construction of buildings and roads, and in related industries such as demolition. However, construction is one of the most dangerous occupations, and much of the work is “off limits” to those under 18 years of age. There are some tasks you can do and do safely; but it is important to know the difference. Young people sometimes carry tools and building materials to the carpenters, prepare gravel or mix cement, do painting or sanding, or help out on a wide range of other tasks.

## The top 3 dangers for youth



- Having something fall on you or you falling into a hole or off of a high place



- Working long hours in the hot sun



- Trying to carry materials that are too heavy

## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Ensure equipment is sturdy and safe (ladders)
- Provide equipment (wheelbarrows) to move heavy materials (wood, stone, cement)
- Make sure that there are guard rails on excavations and wall openings to prevent falls
- Keep the construction site cleaned up, removing things you might trip over or fall on
- Provide protective gear (hard hats, safety goggles, ear plugs, dust masks)
- Provide adequate ventilation for workers who are painting or using other chemicals.

### True stories

Many construction companies are eager to hire young workers, especially during busy times. In many countries, construction activities are restricted for workers under age 18. Make sure you know the laws in your country. Because there are many hazards in construction, it is really important for you to get training. Find out what to do so you do not get hurt, like these young workers did....

Antonio worked for a builder he knew. One day he was carrying a piece of lumber along the roof of a house he was working on. He backed into a chimney hole that had not been covered and fell to the concrete floor below. He survived, but spent months recovering from a broken back.

Franc was a laborer on a construction site. He had to lift and move things—bags of cement, lumber, bricks—all day. One day, while lifting a large bag of cement, he felt a sharp pain in his back. He couldn't move without hurting. He had to miss work for a week, and his back still hurts.

Saeed was in charge of directing the trucks coming into a large construction site. He was directing a dump truck to unload its load of sand when a front end loader backed down a ramp and ran into him. The front end loader backed over him and crushed his chest. He died 13 hours later from his injuries.

## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### FALLS

- Check that the ladder is stable and anchored before climbing. Hold on with both hands when going up or down. Carry tools in a waist belt. Do not stand on the top 3 steps
- Help keep walk ways free of clutter; coil up cords and hoses when they are not in use
- Never run or move too fast or carry items too high for you to see over
- Wear shoes, preferably with rubber soles that will not slip
- Young workers should not be working on scaffolding except for training purposes; the scaffolding must be well-anchored

### STRAIN

- Use wheelbarrows and lifting equipment to move heavy items.
- Get help from a co-worker when lifting heavy items.
- Remember “SLIM” (Safe Lifting Methods)

### GETTING HIT

- Wear a hard hat and safety glasses, provided by your boss.
- Work a safe distance away from moving equipment.
- Be alert to possible hazards (such as tools, bricks, or other things that might fall). Move away, or put up a barrier to prevent objects from falling over the edge

### CHEMICALS & DUST

- Ask about the dangers in the glues, paints and solvents being used,

some damage skin or lungs. If a respirator is required, the work is too dangerous for youth

- Do not use chemicals in enclosed spaces.
- Make sure there is air passing through
- Do not work at all around asbestos or lead
- If you work with stone, wear eye protection and a dust mask (provided by employer)
- Clean up wood and other dust regularly, with a wet mop if possible.

### ELECTRICITY

- Do not touch or use electrical equipment that looks damaged or is wet. Tell your boss or supervisor about it.
- If you move a metal ladder, make sure it does not touch overhead electrical power lines.

### NOISE & HEAT/COLD

- 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.
- Drink a lot of water.
- Take rest breaks out of the sun or heat.
- If you start to feel dizzy or sick to your stomach, tell a co-worker. Get into the shade, drink water, and put water on your head and arms to cool down.

# GARMENT FACTORY

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.

## 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

## 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)
- 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.

# HOTEL CLEANING

## Do you do cleaning work in hotels?

You may be setting tables, serving customers, chopping food, cooking, washing dishes or cleaning up. 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



- Danger of sexual advances or improper requests from hotel guests



- Lifting things which are too heavy for you



- Using harsh cleaning agents without knowing the safety concerns



## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Have the vacuum cleaner, iron, and other materials in good repair
- Have a rule against violence and harassment of any kind and enforce it
- Give you any rubber gloves and any other protective gear you need
- Have a first aid kit and an emergency plan in case you are hurt

### True stories

“It was my second week on the job. I slipped on the wet floor and fell right on my tailbone. I couldn’t walk for two weeks, and couldn’t play soccer the rest of the season.”

“I was chopping up vegetables. Nobody showed me how to do it quickly without getting hurt, and the boss kept shouting at me. I cut my finger badly and couldn’t work for three days.”

“The customers are always yelling at me. One time a customer pushed me so hard I fell down. It makes me scared, and I go home with headaches every day.”

## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### STRAIN

- Get help when lifting heavy items, such as turning the mattress of tucking sheets under
- Remember “SLIM” (Safe Lifting Methods)
- Use a cart to move linen, laundry, or other heavy items. Push rather than pull carts
- Take regular rest breaks, even just short breaks to stretch your body; take turns with other workers to do different types of tasks
- Pad your knees (with a mat or towel) and change your position often when you work on your knees
- Clean up spills immediately
- Do not carry items too tall for you to see over.

### FALLS

- Use a ladder or footstool to reach areas up high. Never stand on the edge of a bathtub, bed or chair.

### CHEMICALS

Cleaning products for toilets and floors are often harsh and can hurt you. To protect yourself,

- Read the labels on the cleaning products you use. Make sure you understand if any are dangerous and what you should do if you get them on your skin or in your eyes. If unsure, or not labeled, ask! If the chemical is hazardous, wear gloves

(provided by your employer). Do not mix chemicals together.

### STRESS

- If someone shouts at or threatens you, call a co-worker or supervisor
- If someone tries to sexually harass you, tell your boss, and get help from a trusted friend or community organization outside the workplace
- Do not work alone in a hotel room if hotel guests are present.

### DISEASE

You can get colds and stomach problems from hotel guests by handling articles that they have used (drinking glasses, kleenex, bed sheets). To protect yourself,

- wash your hands often with soap, especially after handling soiled linen or cleaning the bathroom
- You can also get HIV and other blood-related diseases. To protect yourself, be very careful when you handle trash cans or bags; watch out for syringes, razor blades, and if you can, wear gloves.

### ELECTRIC SHOCK

- Do not touch or plug in electrical equipment when your hands are wet.
- Let someone know if any of the equipment has a frayed cord or is broken. Do not use it until it is fixed.

# HOUSEKEEPER

Millions of young people like you begin their work life as domestic helpers. As a housekeeper, you may be cleaning, taking care of young children or pets or elderly members of the household, cooking and washing up, going to the market, and running errands.

## The top 4 dangers for youth



- Working long hours; insufficient outside contact



- Lifting things which are too heavy for you



- Disrespectful, improper, or abusive comments or actions from employer family



- Using harsh cleaning agents without knowing the safety measures

## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Have the vacuum cleaner, iron, and other materials in good repair
- Give you any rubber gloves, hot pads, and any other protective gear you need
- Allow you time off during the day to go to school or training, to socialize, and to relax
- Provide cleaning products that do not hurt your skin or cause headaches
- Provide a comfortable place to rest and adequate, nourishing food

### True stories

“Even though I am so young, my back hurts every night when I go home. I have to move the furniture when I clean, and the children want to be carried all the time.”

“My employer yells at me all the time, and even has hit me a few times. I don’t think I can ever do the work fast enough or well enough to make her happy – but I don’t know what other work I can do.”

“In the house where I work, everything must be very clean, so the cleaning chemicals I use are very strong. They make my hands cracked and dry, but no one has given me any gloves to wear. The chemicals also make me cough when I use them.”

## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### STRAIN

- Get help when lifting heavy items, such as turning the mattress of tucking sheets under
- Remember “SLIM” (Safe Lifting Methods)
- Use a cloth shawl or other carrier to carry babies for long periods, not just your arms.
- Take regular rest breaks, even just short breaks to stretch your body.
- Take turns with other workers to do different types of tasks.
- When you work on your knees (cleaning the floor) pad your knees with a mat or towel and change your position often.

### FALLS

- Clean up spills immediately
- Pick up items off the floor so that you do not trip over them
- Never run or move too fast
- Do not carry items too tall for you to see over
- Use a ladder or footstool to reach objects stored up high. Never stand on a box or a chair with wheels, or climb the shelves
- Do not stand on the top three steps of a ladder

### CHEMICALS

- Ask for information about any strong cleaning products you are asked to use
- Read the labels before using and follow instructions. If you do not understand the label, write down

the name and ask someone (a nurse, community worker, or educated adult) to explain what it is, what the dangers are, and precautions to take

- Wear gloves when needed. Your employer should provide these.
- Do not mix chemicals together.

### STRESS

- If you are being yelled at or harassed by anyone in the household, talk to a co-worker or someone outside
- If anyone in the household is making sexual advances, get help immediately.

If you feel comfortable with your employer, speak to her, otherwise to a community worker

### DISEASE

- Wash hands with soap often, especially after changing diapers or working with someone who is sick and always before you eat
- Do not share drinking cups or other things you use to eat with

### ELECTRIC SHOCK

- Do not touch or plug in electrical equipment when your hands are wet
- Let someone know if any of the equipment has a frayed cord or is broken. Do not use it until it is fixed.

# RESTAURANT

Many young people, like you, work in foodstalls, fastfood places, cafes, big restaurants, or teashops. You may be setting tables, serving customers, chopping food, cooking, washing dishes or cleaning up.

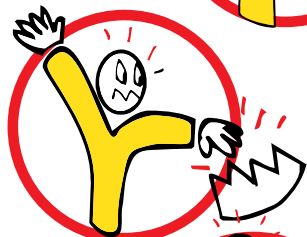
## The top 4 dangers for youth



- Stress and pressure to work for a long time at a fast pace



- Danger of sexual advances from customers or on the street after working too late



- Getting cut with a knife or broken glass



- Getting burned by steam, boiling liquid, or hot grease

## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Check the kitchen and eating area regularly for hazards and make sure they are repaired
- Have a rule against violence and harassment of any kind on the premises where you work
- Give you any protective gear you need (to keep you from getting burned or touching strong cleaning products)
- Have a first aid kit and an emergency plan in case you are hurt
- Make sure you get adequate rest breaks

### True stories

“It was my second week on the job. I slipped on the wet floor and fell right on my tailbone. I couldn’t walk for two weeks, and couldn’t play soccer the rest of the season.”

“I was chopping up vegetables. Nobody showed me how to do it quickly without getting hurt, and the boss kept shouting at me. I cut my finger badly and couldn’t work for three days.”

“The customers are always yelling at me. One time a customer pushed me so hard I fell down. It makes me scared, and I go home with headaches every day.”

-----

Mere has just got a job as a waitress in a busy cafe. It’s her first job as a waitress and she wants her boss and the customers to think she is good at the job. She works hard and is soon offered more and longer shifts. Because the tables are so close together she finds it difficult to move through the cafe quickly without bumping into tables, chairs, and customers. The floor is at slightly different levels where the floor surface changes from wood to tiles, and she has already caught her foot a couple of times. Identify the hazards and risks.

## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### BURNS

- Set pots so the handles do not get hot and so they will not get caught as people pass by
- Do not fill pots too full. Get help when moving heavy, hot pots
- Wear long sleeves. Use potholders, gloves or mitts
- Dry off wet or frozen food before lowering into hot oil
- Do not stand too close to hot oil, or lean over it. Do not pour, strain or carry hot oil. Wait until it is cool

### CUTS

- Keep knives sharp. With a dull knife you have to push harder and it can easily slip and cut
- Never leave knives soaking in the washwater (you will forget they are there)
- If you drop a knife, let it fall. Do not try to catch it (you might catch the blade)
- If you are cutting a lot, wear cut-resistant gloves that fit well, provided by the boss
- Use heavy-duty plastic or metal to scoop out food or ice (a glass one might break)
- Clean up broken glass with a dustpan and broom, then put the pieces in a separate bag

### FALLS

- Clean up spills immediately. Clean floors regularly so grease does not build up

- Never run or move too fast. Do not carry items too high for you to see over
- Wear rubber sandals or shoes with non-skid soles
- Use a ladder or solid stool to reach objects stored up high. Never stand on a cart

### STRAIN & EXHAUSTION

- Get help when lifting heavy items.
- Remember “SLIM” (Safe Lifting Methods)

### DISEASE

- Be careful to wash your hands with soap frequently, and especially before you eat or drink anything

### ELECTRIC SHOCK

- Do not touch or plug in electrical equipment with wet hands
- Report any electrical equipment that has a frayed cord or is broken. Do not use it until it is fixed

### ATTACKS & INSULTS

- Avoid handling money, especially in front of customers
- Check that the back doors are locked at night (but you should still be able to get out easily)
- Do not resist or try to be a hero during a robbery
- If you are being yelled at or harassed by customers



## SMALL FACTORY

In the cities and small towns, lots of youth get jobs in shops which make or repair things. These may include upholstery, locksmith, working as machinist or in factories that produce plastic bags, straws, parts for machines, etc.

### The top 3 dangers for youth



- Dangerous chemicals or fumes



- Power machinery or tools, especially those in bad repair



- Too much noise, too little fresh air

## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Make sure that all the equipment is safe to operate.
- Give you the protective clothing or gear you need (safety goggles, ear plugs, dust masks)
- Have a first aid kit and an emergency plan in case you are hurt
- List the machines workers under 18 years are not allowed to operate.

### True stories

Naima works all day sitting on a short wooden stool, hand painting faces onto dolls that will be sold to tourists. By the end of the day, her back hurts and she has a hard time straightening up. Her hands also ache all the time.

Jin works in machine shop as an assistant. He spends most of his time sweeping and cleaning up the shop, or fetching things for other workers. The grinders are very loud. When Jin goes home at night, he hears ringing in his ears until he falls asleep.

Salim works in a small factory that makes specially shaped plastic drinking straws. He uses a chemical to fuse the straws together into different shapes. The solvent makes his throat burn, and gives him headaches.

-----

Josh works in a factory that makes parts for heaters. He is a machine operator. The machine stops frequently because the parts jam in the feed in tray. Josh has to clear the machine regularly but he hasn't had any training about how to do this safely and, to save time, he usually clears the jammed product without shutting off the machine. This doesn't worry him as he feels confident that he can quickly clear the machine without any risk to himself. What can happen to Josh?

## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### MACHINE INJURIES

- Wear goggles (provided by your boss) if machines spray out bits of material
- Wear clothes that are not loose so they do not get caught in the machines
- Wear strong shoes. Do not wear sandals.

### FALLS

- Clean up liquid spills immediately.
- 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.

### CHEMICALS/DUST

- Ask for information about the chemicals you use. Read the labels and follow instructions before using. If you do not understand the label, write down the name and ask someone for help. Do not use chemicals in enclosed spaces. Make sure there is air going through the work area.
- Wear eye protection and gloves. If the chemicals are so dangerous that the label says to wear a respirator, it is too hazardous for you!
- 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
- Do not put a greasy/oily rag in your pocket (danger of testicular cancer)

### BODY STRAIN

- Get help when lifting heavy items (another person or a mechanical lifting device)
- remember “SLIM” (Safe Lifting Methods)

- Change your position from time to time. Add a cushion. Use a seat that is the right height so you do not have to stoop over or reach up to do the task.
- Take a rest break every 2-3 hours, even a short break helps to stretch the body.
- Take turns with other workers to do different types of tasks.
- Wear shoes or sandals with padding inside.
- Stand on a mat. Even a couple layers of cardboard can help.
- Change position, move around, or shift weight from one foot to the other.

### HARASSMENT

- If you are being yelled at, or hit, or harassed by anyone at work, get help, either from a coworker, your boss or someone outside the workplace.

### ELECTRIC SHOCKS

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

### 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.

### HOT WORK ENVIRONMENT

- 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.

# STORE

You have a good job selling things that people need. Your work probably includes waiting on customers, stocking shelves, writing up bills, getting merchandise from the stock room or warehouse, cleaning the shop, and putting things in order. This can be good and decent work, but there are always things that can hurt you or make you sick.

## The top 4 dangers for youth



- Carrying objects too heavy for them.



- Dealing with angry customers



- Receiving improper requests (sexual or otherwise) from customers or co-workers



- Working too long, or too late in the evening

## What YOUR EMPLOYER should do so you are safe

- Provide safe equipment, such as good ladders, carts for moving heavy boxes
- Make sure there is a security plan to protect you from assault or robbery (e.g. keeping little cash on hand, having a locked safe, never counting money alone)
- Make sure the floor is clear of clutter or things to trip on
- Have a clean washroom
- Make sure you have adequate rest breaks.

### True stories

“One day, I saw someone trying to steal something. I chased after them out the door. When I caught up with the thief, he turned around and cut me badly with a knife.”

“We have to lift and move boxes all day. One day, as I was lifting a heavy carton, there was a sharp pain in my back. I couldn’t move without hurting. I had to miss work for a week, and it keeps coming back.”

“I have to clean the floors every night with a cleaning chemical. It makes my hands cracked and dry, but we don’t have any gloves to wear.”

-----

Ben works at a petrol station. He takes the money from customers. Some nights he works alone. He hasn’t had any training about how to deal with abusive, drunk or drug effected customers. He isn’t confident enough to raise the issue of dealing with such difficult customers with his boss. What should he do?

## Some other dangers and what to do about them

### **VIOLENCE**

- Do not count cash in front of customers.
- Do not work alone or isolated from others.
- Young workers should not work at night
- Do not resist during a robbery. Do not chase thieves or shoplifters. Call your boss.
- If customers are arguing with you or insulting you, get help from a co-worker

### **FALLS**

- Keep walk ways free of things to trip on. Never run or move too fast.
- Do not carry items too tall for you to see over.
- Use a ladder or footstool to reach objects stored up high. Never stand on a box or cart, or climb up the racks or shelves Do not stand on the top 3 steps of a ladder

### **DISEASE**

- Wash hands with soap frequently and always before eating or drinking something

### **BODY STRAIN**

- Use wheeled carts or trolleys to move boxes and other items.
- Get help when lifting heavy items.
- Remember “SLIM” (Safe Lifting Methods)
- Take regular breaks.
- Wear shoes with cushions inside or stand on a mat or folded cardboard.
- Change position, move around, or shift weight from one foot to the other

### **ELECTRIC SHOCKS**

- Do not touch or plug in electrical equipment with wet hands.
- Report if any equipment has frayed cords or is broken. Do not use it until it is fixed

# WOOD-WORKING

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 craftsman 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 12 cause poisoning



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

## 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

## PART 3: MOVING HEAVY LOADS

### Moving heavy loads

As many as a third of all workers get hurt lifting or carrying loads. Young people in the workforce over the minimum legal age of employment should take extra care whenever when they pick up, hold, put down, push, pull, carry or move something that is heavy. The load can be alive (a person or animal) or an object. The damage can be slow causing gradual damage to bones and/or muscles as when lifting or handling over a long period of time. Or the damage can be quick as when an accident causes a sudden injury.

There are four factors that increase the possibility of injury, particularly back injury:

- the load
- the task
- the environment
- the individual

### If the load is ...

- **Too heavy.** There is no weight limit that is safe for everybody — especially for young workers. (Note: 20–25 kilos is considered heavy for European adults).
- **Too large.** If the load is large it is not possible to follow the basic rules for lifting and carrying and the muscles will get tired more rapidly.
- **Difficult to grasp.** This can result in the object slipping and causing an accident. Loads with sharp edges or made from dangerous materials can injure workers.
- **Unbalanced or unstable.** This leads to uneven loading of muscles and fatigue due to the centre of gravity of the object being away from the middle of the worker's body.
- **Difficult to reach.** Reaching with outstretched arms, or bending or twisting the trunk of the body takes greater muscular force.
- **Too high.** If the load is of a shape or size that obscures the worker's view, it increases the possibility of slipping/tripping, falling or collision.

### If the task is ...

- **Too strenuous.** For example, if the lifting is done too frequently or for too long a time;
- **Awkward.** For example, if it requires bending over, twisting, raising the arms, bending the wrists, or long reaches.
- **Repetitive.** For example, if it is done again and again, especially if the motion is rapid.

### If the environment has ...

- **Too little space.** Insufficient space to lift or move around in may force the worker into an awkward posture or to move unsafely.
- **Poor flooring.** An uneven, unstable or slippery floor may increase the risk of accidents.
- **Too hot/cold.** Heat makes workers feel tired, and sweat makes handholds slippery, meaning that more force must be used. Cold can make hands numb, making it hard to grip.
- **Poor lighting.** Insufficient lighting may increase the risk of accidents, or force workers into awkward positions in order to see what they are doing.

### If the individual has ...

- Little experience, training or familiarity with the job – which is often the case with young workers – the risk of accident is higher
- A slight build (height, weight) or less strength (a gender consideration)
- Prior history of back disorders.

## CORRECT HANDLING TECHNIQUES

### LIFTING

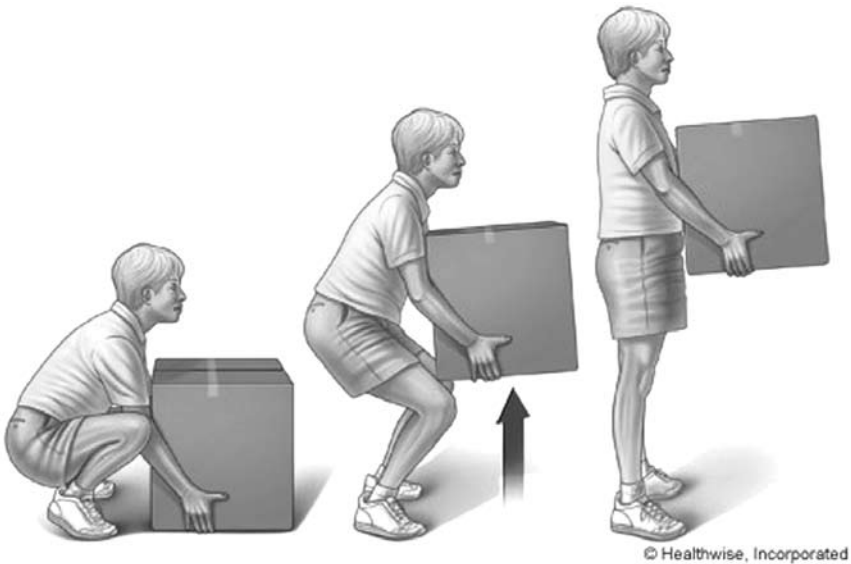
Before lifting a load, you need to plan and prepare for the task. Make sure that:

- You know where you are going;
- The area where you move is clear of obstacles;
- You have a good grip on the load;

- Your hands, the load and any handles are not slippery;
- If you are lifting with someone else, both of you know what you are doing before you start.

You should use the following technique when lifting a load

- Put your feet around the load, with your body over it (if this is not feasible, try to get your body as close as possible to the load).
- Use the muscles of your legs when lifting.
- Straighten your back.
- Pull the load as close as possible to your body.
- Lift and carry the load with straight downward turned arms.



### **PUSHING AND PULLING**

- You should push and pull using your body's own weight. Lean forward when pushing, lean backwards when pulling;
- Be sure you have enough grip on the floor to be able to lean forward/backwards;
- Avoid twisting and bending your back; move your feet to turn, not your body

- Use handles/hand grips so that you can use your hands to exert a force; handle height should be between the shoulder and waist so that you can push/pull in a good, natural posture;
- Handling devices should be well-maintained with wheels the right size so they run smoothly;
- It is important that the floors are hard, even and clean.



### RISK ASSESSMENT

Employers should assess the health and safety risks that young workers are likely face when they lift and carry things. The steps for carrying out an effective risk assessment are simple:

- **Look for hazards that could cause accidents, injuries or ill health**
- **Evaluate who might be harmed and how this might happen**
- **Evaluate whether existing precautions are adequate or if more are needed**
- **Monitor the risks, and review preventive measures**

It is often helpful if young workers participate in the risk assessment. Tackling workplace hazards in this way will improve workers' health and well-being, and prevent reductions in productivity.

## Case Studies

**Read the case studies: what should have been done to prevent injury or death of the young worker?**

### **Case 1- Amputation in meat grinder**

In 2000, a 17-year-old bagger employed at his family's retail grocery store suffered amputation of his right arm when it became caught in an operating meat grinder. A customer had asked him for ground beef. Because none was available at the meat counter, he decided to operate the grinder himself. Some of the meat became stuck in the grinder bowl. He removed the feed pan and reached into the bowl with his right hand, pushing the meat down into the "worm," a rotating machine part shaped like a corkscrew. When meat fed from the bowl, the worm caught his hand and fed it into the grinder's barrel, amputating his hand and part of his lower right arm.

### **Case 2- Suffocation in corn bin**

In 1999, a 15-year-old worker suffocated in a corn bin while working on his family's farm. He entered a 20,000-bushel corn bin through a door at the top to scoop corn away from a lower door of the bin. The corn in the bin sloped from the sides to the center. The center portion of the bin was empty, and the corn at the sides was about 7 feet high. A co-worker opened the bin door, didn't see the young worker, and assumed he had exited from the bin. About 30 minutes after the young worker entered the bin, two co-workers entered to check on him. They found him suffocated under approximately 4 feet of corn.

### **Case 3- Chlorine gas inhalation**

A 16-year-old male restaurant worker was preparing to clean the floor by mixing cleaning solutions. During the mixing, noxious fumes were emitted and he began to feel ill and light-headed. He developed chest pains and was taken to an emergency department, where he was treated for chlorine gas inhalation.

### **Case 4- Shooting during robbery attempt**

In 2000, a 16-year-old restaurant cashier died when she was shot in the head during an armed robbery attempt. At 1:15 pm, a man approached the cashier and her mother, a co-owner of the restaurant, at the cash

## Case Studies

register. He pointed a gun at the cashier, demanded money from the register, and fired the gun, striking her in the face. She was transported to the hospital and pronounced dead.

### **Case 5- Burned in restaurant**

In 1997, a 17-year-old worker in a fast-food restaurant suffered second- and third-degree burns on her shoulder, back, chest, and arm when hot grease splattered from an uncovered, portable grease-filtering machine. A co-worker was using the machine 10 feet away to filter hot grease from a fryer used to cook French fries. As a result of the burns, the victim has undergone skin grafts and suffered permanent nerve damage.

### **Case 6- Crushing death by forklift**

In 2000, a 17-year-old labourer working at a salvage lumber business was fatally injured when the forklift he was operating overturned. A co-worker was riding on the right side of the forklift, holding on to the overhead guard. As the young worker turned the forklift sharply to the left, it tipped and overturned to the right. His co-worker jumped out, landing with her ankle pinned to the ground by the machine. She sustained minor injuries. The operator, who was thrown from the operator's seat, landed with his head caught between the overhead guard and the ground. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

### **Case 7- Crushing death beneath street sweeper**

In 1996, a 13-year-old construction labourer was crushed beneath an unattended rolling street sweeper while working at an asphalt plant owned by his father. The unattended vehicle had rolled approximately 140 feet, striking the young victim. No one else on the site saw the incident occur.

### **Case 8- Inhalation of insecticide-containing fertilizer**

A 16-year-old male stock handler was re-stocking shop shelves with bags of insecticide-containing fertilizer when he inhaled dust from a leaking bag. He began to choke, cough, and feel light-headed. The following morning when his symptoms had not resolved he was taken to an emergency department where he was treated for insecticide and fertilizer inhalation.

**My Guide to Safe Work for Young People in the Pacific** has been adapted from the ILO's resources on hazardous child labour and the "Safe Work for Youth". It provides information about the occupational hazards and risks faced by young workers and what to do about them! It explores safety issues for young workers in 10 different work sectors, and safety issues for young workers on moving heavy loads.

**My Guide to Safe Work for Young People in the Pacific** is developed by the Tackling Child Labour through Education project (TACKLE II Fiji), funded by the European Union.

ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries  
8th Floor FNPF Place  
343-359 Victoria Parade  
Suva, Fiji  
Tel: +679-3313866  
Fax: +679- 3300248  
Email: [suva@ilo.org](mailto:suva@ilo.org)  
[www.ilo.org/suva](http://www.ilo.org/suva)

