

Tips for keeping young workers safe

Young workers are twice as likely to be injured on the job, often due to lack of training. Workers between 16 and 24 may also be at greater risk for injury due to factors like inexperience, overconfidence, risk-taking behavior, and peer pressure. A traditional training plan might not be as effective. - *National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health*



Assign a mentor

Preferably someone who is respected and experienced. Provide time for them to get to know each other.



Minimize distraction

Provide training in a familiar environment. Keep trainings short and focused on fewer tasks at a time.



Tour the facility

Discuss areas and equipment that are off limits. Go over emergency procedures.



Ongoing feedback

Acknowledge good behavior and safe practices. Coach safe behavior by asking why they are doing it that way. Discuss solutions.



Discussion time

Respect is very important for young workers. Discuss their rights, ask for ideas, and explain rules on the job. Avoid asking yes/no questions.



Asking questions

Discuss the importance of getting clarification and reporting hazards. Reinforce your desired communication behavior.

When someone is new to a job, what may be obvious to you is not always obvious to them. Addressing common hazards can have a big impact in preventing the four most common types of injuries in young workers: slips, trips, and falls; struck by/against; lacerations or puncture wounds; and strains.

What you can do to prevent injuries among young workers:



Provide training on the proper use of each piece of equipment (ladders, knives, different work tasks, etc.)



Reduce the need for heavy work that can increase the chance for injuries (bending, twisting, reaching, carrying heavy boxes, and overwhelming tasks)



Implement policies to minimize distractions such as a no phone policy



Give positive feedback when young workers are practicing safety on the job



Ask staff to identify concerns and hazards in the workplace at safety meetings



Show patience with young workers as they learn their role in the company



Review current procedures to ensure they are up to date



Hold staff accountable for their actions while working



Coach on the spot when a young worker is distracted or doing a task incorrectly



Check with the young workers often to see how they are doing in their position

Did you know?

Another major source of injury in young workers is motor vehicle accidents. For more information go to saif.com/safedriving.

Key takeaway

“Workers are up to four times more likely to be injured in their first four weeks on a new job.”

- *Population and Workforce Studies Group, Institute for Work & Health*

Activity

Hands-on training is the best way for an employee to learn a new task or piece of equipment. Use this pattern to maximize retention and verify understanding:

1. **I Do:** The trainer should demonstrate each step in the process; pointing out safety features
2. **We Do:** The trainer and the young worker perform the task together; articulating each step in the process
3. **You Do:** The young worker does the task by themselves; the trainer provides feedback as needed
4. **You Teach:** The young worker teaches back to the trainer how to do the task