

## TOPIC: Safety For Young Workers

**ACKNOWLEDGE:** Thank you for being here and participating in this safety talk. I know your time is valuable, so I will ensure every moment of this talk is worth your while (*make eye contact with the entire group*).

### Training Tips:

**Ask a lot of questions:** While delivering your Safety Talk, ask questions that ‘hook the mind’ and engage your participants. The simple act of asking questions is a High Impact Training technique!

**Raise a hand when asking questions:** Directed to your audience, you’ll often find that people are more willing to answer your questions and become active participants... try it out! Also, pause for a moment after asking a question; waiting for and encouraging responses from the group.

**Provide an example of a personal experience:** (or a recent news event) For instance: “A close friend of mine once \_\_\_\_\_”, or “Just last week \_\_\_\_\_”. This is a very effective method to help participants relate to your topic. It often helps them to realize: ‘*Yeah, this could affect me. I should listen to this.*’

*Note: You will need to change your wording depending on whether you are delivering this safety talk to people supervising and working with young workers or to young workers directly.*

*NOTE: This Safety Talk is a great pairing with 1Life’s Young Worker Online Training Course*

**What’s In It for Me (WIIFM)?** I am here to deliver a brief safety talk on safety for young workers. This is a very important subject since young workers are **5 to 7 times** more likely to be injured in the first 4 weeks of a new job!

**ASK:** How many young people between the ages of 15 and 24 do you think were killed on the job between 2000 and 2012 in Manitoba? ANSWER: 26

How many young workers people between the ages of 15 and 24 do you think are injured EVERY MONTH in Manitoba? ANSWER: 500! (WCB Manitoba Statistics)

**State:** Facts about Young Workers

- Workers aged 15 – 24 are the highest risk for workplace injuries.
- More than 50% of work related incidents happen during a young worker’s first 6 months on the job and nearly 20% occur in the first month. (Source: WCB BC)

**ASK:** What do you think the reasons for this might be?

- They may be unaware of workplace risks and their consequences
- They may have less work experience
- They may be scared or intimidated to speak up, especially if they are new
- They are eager to impress
- They might be afraid to look foolish and, therefore, afraid to ask questions
- They don’t want to “rock the boat”



**State:** If you are a young worker it is important for you to be aware that you have a right to know about hazards in the workplace and to be trained in the safe way of doing work. You must talk to your supervisor if you are not clear about how to do a job safely.



**Remember:** If you are the supervisor of a young worker it is important they are trained on the hazards in your workplace and the safe way of doing work.

**State:** A study entitled “Young worker responses to workplace hazards” conducted under the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba Community Initiatives Grant Program April 17, 2008 to August 20, 2010 found that despite facing a range of potentially harmful work-related hazards; most of the teenaged workers **would not speak up when they had safety concerns.**

Most participants in the study preferred **patience** as a short-to-medium term response to safety concerns because:

- **They are fearful of raising safety concerns.** Fear seemed to be associated with newcomer status, age, feelings of powerlessness to make any changes. Fear was also associated with the perceived consequences of speaking out about concerns including being fired.
- **The hazard is not perceived as a serious threat.** In most cases, when a hazard was not perceived as a serious threat to one’s personal safety, it was tolerated.
- **The social process takes time.** The study found that voice is a social process whereby teenaged workers informally consult work colleagues about safety issues. When coworkers agree that a problem exists the concern is legitimated and collective or individual action can occur. The likelihood of upward voice increased when management was genuinely open to hearing concerns.

When a matter was considered serious, many teenagers said they would or have tried speaking up. More often, speaking up was described as a collective act. Trepidation and caution were the hallmarks of the voicing / speaking up process.

It has been found that young workers are most vulnerable to injury when they first start at a job, which the study found coincides with the period during which young workers are most reluctant to speak up about safety concerns and have underdeveloped relationships with their coworkers.

Supervisors and managers play a key role in whether younger workers raise safety issues. Approximately half of participants said their current and former supervisors were genuinely open to listening to their safety concerns and taking action on suggestions. Others described management and owners who were not receptive to hearing about safety concerns.

Other reasons young workers are more likely to be injured on the job include:

- They receive little or no safety training. Only 23 per cent of workers aged 15 to 24 who were in their first year on the job reported that they had received safety, orientation or equipment training. Forty-six percent said they had received no training at all.
- They receive little or no supervision. A U.S. study found that 80 per cent of work-related injuries among adolescents occurred when no supervisor was present.
- They are assigned physically demanding or dangerous tasks
- They have to use equipment or machinery designed for adults
- They are unaware of their rights and responsibilities

**ASK:** As a young worker, what are some takeaways from this safety talk that you can apply to keep yourself safe?

Answers may include:

- *Speak with my supervisor if I have a safety concern*
- *If I am not sure how to do a task safely, ask my supervisor*
- *Learn about my rights and responsibilities as a worker*
- *Ask to be trained in the safe way of doing work*

**ASK:** As a supervisor, what are some takeaways that you can apply to keep young workers under your supervision safe on the job?

Answers may include:

- *Encourage young workers to speak up if they have concerns about their safety and health*
- *Do not intimidate young workers, ensure that they feel “safe” to talk to you about their concerns*
- *Ensure that young workers are trained in the safe way of doing work*
- *Do not assign tasks to young workers that require the use of equipment or machinery designed for adults*
- *Teach young workers their rights and responsibilities*
- *Provide safety, orientation, and (when applicable) equipment training; do not allow workers to use equipment they have not been trained on*
- *Provide competent and consistent supervision*



(Read the full study at: <http://safemanitoba.com/RWIP-YoungWorkerResponse>)

## In Summary

- Ensure that young workers know their rights and responsibilities; their future could depend on it.
- Ensure your workers are trained appropriately for the task and supervised.
- Encourage young workers to ask questions or speak up. SO MANY young workers would not be dead or seriously injured if they would have had the courage to speak out BEFORE they did the job.
- Ensure young workers wear all personal protective equipment and follow safe work procedures.
- Ensure that young workers know their right to refuse unsafe work and feel “safe” to do so.



**Remember** It is everyone’s responsibility to work safe. Young workers have a responsibility to conduct themselves so that they make a positive contribution to our workplace and the other employees that are depending on them to contribute to creating a safe and healthy workplace. Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that all workers are aware of the hazards, and are trained in the safe way of doing work and enforcing safe working practices.

**STATE:** If you have any questions regarding the topic discussed today, please let me know. If I don’t have an answer for you now, I will direct your question to another individual, if you are comfortable with that. We want you to be safe and feel safe while at work!

## **Facilitator, remember to:**

1. Ask for the commitment of your employees,
2. Answer all questions,
3. Thank them for their time and
4. Document that this safety talk occurred

<b>RECORD OF SAFETY TALK</b>	
<b>Safety For Young Workers</b>	
<b>Company Name:</b>	<b>Work Location Dept.:</b>
<b>Talk Given by:</b>	<b>Date / Time:</b>

<b>Results of inspection, demonstration or other activity or suggestions during talk:</b>

<b>List of All Employees Who Attended the Safety Talk:</b>	
<b>Name (PRINT)</b>	<i>Signature</i>
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Held: \_\_\_\_\_