7 things you’d better know

Young Worker Awareness Program

We dedicate this program to all the young workers who have been injured or lost their lives in the workplace.

We would like to thank the many volunteers and staff who share their time, experiences and dedication in the delivery of this program to Ontario’s young people.

Funded by

Resource Book
Young Worker Awareness Program

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There are hazards in every workplace and you — the young and inexperienced worker — are especially at risk.

You need to be able to identify the hazards in your workplace.

You have the legal right to protect your health and safety.

Your employer, your supervisor(s), and you all have legal responsibilities to make sure the workplace is healthy and safe.

Your employer and your supervisor must ensure you have the information or required training and equipment you need to protect yourself.

If you are injured or become sick at the workplace, you must report it to your supervisor or employer.

It’s not a game. You need to protect yourself.

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There are hazards in every workplace and you—the young and inexperienced worker—are especially at risk.

Welcome to the Young Worker Awareness Program.

Our goal is to give you the health and safety awareness you need to protect yourself and your fellow workers.

Why?

Because an average of 42 young Ontario workers are injured, made ill, or killed on the job every day. Think of it. That’s almost 2 young workers injured every hour of every day and every night, seven days a week, and it’s often because of what they didn’t know.

Young workers like you often don’t have the experience to recognize and avoid workplace hazards. And that makes it more likely you will suffer injury or death on the job.

Table saw

A 17-year-old worker was told to use the table saw at his new workplace.

There wasn’t a push stick for the saw so the young worker used his hands to guide a piece of wood through a cut.

There was also no guard on the blade.

He lost parts of two fingers.

What went wrong? The table saw should have had a guard and a push stick. And the young worker should have been instructed how to use the saw safely.

Young workers like you often don’t know the questions to ask to protect yourself, don’t know who to ask, don’t even know you have the right to protect your health and your safety.

You do. And that’s what this program is all about.

Who is a young worker?

If you’re working—part-time or full-time—and you’re between 15 and 24 years of age, then you are considered to be a young worker.
How are Young Workers getting hurt?

You name it, and it happens. Young workers are injured by slips and falls, by over exerting themselves, by objects that hit them, by exposure to hazardous chemicals, and by contact with hot materials.

Young workers are also injured by powerful machines they don’t understand, that may not have guards to protect fingers and arms, or that may not be operated safely.

- In 1999, 16 young workers were killed, 12 of them at small employers with less than 20 employees.
- In 1999, 254 young workers suffered the loss of a body part when it was torn off (avulsion) or cut off (amputation).

That’s just a small part of the 15,366 young workers injured in 1999 alone.

Many say they never thought they could get hurt on the job, or believed it could happen to them.

Top 5 causes of injury to young workers 1996-1999:

1. Struck against, struck by object
2. Overexertion
3. Falls
4. Bodily reaction excluding overexertions and repetitive motion
5. Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects

The most common injuries to young workers 1996-1999:

- Sprains and strains
- Loss of body part by amputation or avulsion
- Abrasions, blisters, contusions & friction burns
- Fractures
- Chemical, electrical and heat burns

Key Points

⚠️ Inexperience puts young workers at greater risk of injury, illness and death.
⚠️ Lack of knowledge means young workers often don’t know how to protect themselves.
⚠️ Young workers need to know how to Work Smart! Work Safe!

Your employer and your supervisor have a duty to make you aware of the hazards of your job. The Young Worker Awareness Program is not a substitute for that training.
What is a hazard?

A hazard is anything that can hurt you or make you ill.

We deal with hazards every day—walking across busy streets, driving to school or work, playing sports we enjoy—and we take it for granted that nothing will happen to us. But the hazards you face at work are different.

Why?

Because you’ve been trained how to deal with everyday hazards by your parents, teachers and coaches. You haven’t been trained how to recognize, assess and control the hazards you may find in the workplace.

And, in this case, ignorance is not bliss.

Recognizing hazards

But how? You might be working in a store, fast food restaurant or animal shelter. Or you might be painting houses, or spraying grass at the golf course. How can you recognize, never mind assess and control all the hazards that might be there?

For a start, learn the four different types of hazards, and read the case histories presented throughout this book.
Types of Hazards

**Physical Hazards** are common in many workplaces. They include unsafe machines and environmental conditions that can cause injuries, illness and death. Watch out for:

- electricity
- unguarded moving machinery parts like saw blades and conveyor belts
- constant loud noise
- high exposure to sunlight/ultraviolet rays, heat or cold
- ladders and scaffolds
- liquids/spills on the floor

**Biological Hazards** come with working with animals and people, for instance, in a day care, hospital or veterinary office. Guard against:

- blood and body fluids
- fungi
- bacteria and viruses
- plants
- insect bites
- animal and bird droppings

**Chemical Hazards** Many workplaces use hazardous materials that can injure workers. Beware of:

- liquids like cleaning products, paints, acids and solvents
- vapours and fumes like welding fumes and solvent vapours
- gases like acetylene, propane, carbon monoxide and helium
- flammable materials like gasoline, solvents and explosive chemicals

**Ergonomic Hazards** are the effects of the workplace or job design on a worker. These include:

- poor lighting
- poor workstations and chairs
- constant lifting
- poor posture
- repeating the same movements over and over
- having to use too much force

**Key Points**

⚠️ Workplace safety is based on recognizing, assessing and controlling hazards.

⚠️ There are four types of hazards you may find in your workplace: Physical, Chemical, Biological and Ergonomic.
Assessing hazards

Once a hazard has been recognized, it needs to be assessed for its danger and the type of injury it can cause. Ask yourself:

How can this hazard hurt me or another worker? How big is the risk? Is it an immediate danger, for instance a saw blade that can amputate a finger? Or can it cause an injury or illness over a long period of time, for instance a chemical that causes cancer?

To answer these questions, you need to understand two different types of injuries.

Acute injuries

Some hazards cause injuries right away, for instance, slippery floors, hot grease or boiling water, and unguarded machines like a table saw.

These traumatic injuries are called acute and are often caused by physical and chemical hazards.

Chronic injuries

Some hazards take a long time to cause injury or sickness and you often don’t know it’s happening.

For instance, some chemical hazards get into your body by breathing, swallowing or soaking in through your skin but can take years to show their damage. Or you can be hurt by lifting and climbing or by ergonomic hazards such as repeating the same actions over and over.

These gradual onset injuries are called chronic.
Controlling hazards

Hazards should be eliminated if at all possible. For example, if a hazardous chemical can be replaced with a non-hazardous chemical, then it should be.

But if a hazard can’t be eliminated, then it has to be **controlled** to reduce the risk of injury or illness. There are four typical ways used to control hazards:

**Physical** or engineering controls involve redesigning the source of the hazard. Some examples are:

- adding metal guards to prevent hands touching a saw blade
- ventilating a work area to remove toxic vapours
- creating systems that prevent machines from starting when a worker is servicing them

**Operational controls** set rules for how people work with or around hazards. These are the **dos and don'ts** workers must follow. They are often called Safe Work Practices or Procedures.

Safe work procedures often deal with how to use any physical controls for the hazard and what protective equipment must be used.

**Administrative controls** deal with how often and how long people are allowed to work with a hazard. For instance:

- limiting working times to reduce fatigue
- job rotations to reduce repetitive strain injuries
- additional rest breaks in extremely hot or cold weather

**Personal protective equipment and facilities** are used to protect workers from hazards that can’t be fully controlled any other way. For instance:

- safety glasses to protect the eyes from flying debris
- eye wash stations near areas where hazardous chemicals are used
- hand wash stations where harmful biological materials such as blood are handled

It’s your job to follow any safety procedures and to use any protective equipment or facilities those procedures require. It’s also your responsibility to report hazards and to do the job the way you were trained to do it.

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**Key Points**

⚠️ **Acute** injuries occur immediately, often from physical and chemical hazards.

⚠️ **Chronic** injuries happen over time, often from chemical and ergonomic hazards.

⚠️ Hazards can be controlled by one or more physical, operational and administrative controls and/or protective equipment and facilities.
Laws and Regulations

Both the Ontario government and the Government of Canada have laws to protect the health and safety of workers under their jurisdictions. These laws are called Acts.

An Act is general. It sets out what the law is about, whom it applies to and the penalties for disobeying it.

Some Acts also have Regulations. Regulations are specific. They spell out all the details that you need to know in order to obey the law.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act

Most, but not all, Ontario workers are protected by the province’s Occupational Health and Safety Act or OHSA. (We’ll just call it the Act.)

The Act sets out general health and safety requirements for every workplace it applies to. Ontario’s Ministry of Labour (MOL) enforces the Act, and MOL inspectors have strong powers to inspect workplaces and investigate accidents. They can also issue orders requiring changes to meet the Act’s requirements and can order that a machine process be stopped until it complies with the Act.

MOL Inspectors can also lay charges against companies or people breaking the law. If convicted, the person or company can be fined and/or put in jail.

Golf course

A young worker was instructed to cut the end off an 8” x 8” piece of lumber with a chain saw. The young worker didn’t realize that the chain saw was missing two important safety features – a tip guard and a kick back device.

The chain saw caught in the wood and ‘kicked back,’ slicing the young worker’s face. He required major plastic surgery.

What went wrong? By law, employers must ensure any equipment is regularly checked for safety. The chain saw should have been guarded, and the young worker should have been instructed how to operate it safely.

You have the legal right to protect your health and safety.

Any person convicted of an offence against the Act can be fined up to $25,000 or be jailed for up to one year, or both. An employer can be fined up to $500,000.
The Act’s Regulations

The Occupational Health and Safety Act has many Regulations that apply to specific occupations, types of workplaces and/or workplace hazards.

- For instance, there are specific regulations for occupations like firefighters, teachers and university academics.
- And there are regulations for specific workplaces such as health care facilities, industrial establishments, construction and mining.
- Then there are regulations to deal with certain kinds of hazards like biological agents and x-rays.
- Finally, there’s a Regulation that covers most hazardous materials (see WHMIS on page 16), and there are Regulations covering eleven especially dangerous materials called Designated Substances.

These Regulations are very detailed and they have the same legal force as the Act itself. The same penalties apply. You should know which, if any, of these Regulations apply to your job and workplace.

See page 23, OHSA Regulations in Tell me more for the complete list.

Federal laws

The federal government has responsibility for a wide range of workplaces. If you work in one of these locations, (see page 22, Federal Workplaces in Tell me more) the federal government’s Canada Labour Code Part 2 and its Regulations protect your health and safety, not Ontario’s Occupational Health and Safety Act. However, the rules are very similar for both laws.

Key Points

⚠ Governments protect workers through Acts and Regulations.

⚠ In Ontario, the Occupational Health and Safety Act provides the general requirements for workplace health and safety

⚠ The Act’s Regulations provide detailed rules for specific workplaces and workplace hazards.

Do you work on a farm?

Or as a nanny or domestic servant?

Or do you work for the federal government?

Then you are not covered by Ontario’s Occupational Health and Safety Act, but you may be covered by federal law.
The law protects...

You have the legal right to protect your health and safety.

You have the Right to Participate.

You're asked to clean the washrooms in the restaurant where you work. You are given a toilet bowl cleaner, some ammonia and some bleach—a combination that you remember from somewhere can be hazardous. Your boss says, "Let's read the labels to make sure we know the safe way to do the job."

The next day, the restaurant's Health and Safety representative is conducting an inspection and stops to ask you if you have any concerns or suggestions. You ask if there isn't a safer cleaner that could be used.

You have the Right to Refuse Unsafe Work.

The next day, you tell your boss about the health and safety representative's suggestion for a safer cleaner. But the boss tells you to keep on using the more dangerous cleaner. What do you do?

You have the Right to Know.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act gives every worker three important basic rights.

You have the Right to Refuse Unsafe Work.

The next day, the restaurant's Health and Safety representative is conducting an inspection and stops to ask you if you have any concerns or suggestions. You ask if there isn't a safer cleaner that could be used.

You have the Right to Refuse Unsafe Work.

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REMEMBER:

Young workers who understand these rights and know how to use them are better able to protect themselves on the job. And remember you can't be disciplined for exercising a right or responsibility.
When can you Refuse Unsafe Work?

Talking to your supervisor or boss can solve most unsafe conditions. It is your responsibility to tell your boss when you have a concern about unsafe work. After that, it is the employer’s responsibility to get the problem corrected.

But there are times when health and safety problems are not solved by the employer and/or supervisor. Broadly speaking, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, you have the Right to Refuse work if you believe the work or the work you are doing is unsafe, either for you or for a co-worker.

However, this right is restricted for certain public service workplaces such as police, fire, jails and health care.

What happens if you Refuse?

Your boss or supervisor may not agree the work is hazardous. But, under the Act, once you have refused to do a task you believe is unsafe, you cannot be ordered to do it and you cannot be disciplined for the refusal.

But, be warned there are steps that must be followed by you, your supervisor and your employer. These are spelled out in the Act and described in Tell me more. (See Work Refusal Process, page 24). Make sure you understand what the law requires. If you have any questions, talk to your supervisor or to your company’s JHSC member or Health and Safety Representative.

Key Points

⚠️ The OHS Act gives you the Right to Know, the Right to Participate and the Right to Refuse Unsafe Work.

⚠️ According to the Act, your employer or supervisor cannot discipline you for refusing to do a task you believe is unsafe.

⚠️ You, your supervisor and your employer must follow the steps of the Work Refusal Process carefully.

Laboratory

A young worker was hired by a laboratory, and part of the job was to wash test tubes and other glassware.

The young worker was instructed to final rinse the items with a chemical called methylene chloride. No other information was given and ventilation of the chemical vapours was poor.

After some time, the young worker suddenly collapsed and died of a heart attack.

What went wrong? Heart attacks are a known risk from exposure to methylene chloride. The young worker wasn’t told of this risk, wasn’t instructed on how to handle the chemical safely and wasn’t told to wear breathing equipment that would prevent her from inhaling the chemical. Finally, the employer should have ensured that there was proper ventilation.
The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires that every member of the workplace do their part to ensure a safe and healthy environment. The Act legislates duties and responsibilities for the employer, supervisor, worker and others.

Employers shall...
Among other responsibilities:

- make sure that required health and safety training is given to you;
- make sure that you are provided with proper equipment and trained to use it safely;
- make your supervisors and you aware of any known hazards in the workplace;
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect you;
- in workplaces with more than 5 workers, have a written health and safety policy and program, and post it where you can read it;
- post the names and work locations of Joint Health and Safety Committee members or Representatives where you can see them;
- post the Act and the WSIB In Case of Injury at Work poster where you can read them;
- post Ministry of Labour orders where you can see them.

Ice cream mixer
Ice cream mixers are machines that need constant cleaning. Like any machine, their power needs to be locked out – meaning there's no way to turn them on before servicing is completed.

A young worker was instructed to clean the inside of such a mixer. While bending inside the machine, she accidentally stepped on the foot pedal that started and stopped the machine.

The mixer started. The young worker suffered severe damage to the fingers and tendons of one hand.

What went wrong? The young worker's supervisor failed to ensure the machine was safe to use and failed to instruct the young worker in how to lock it out.
Supervisors (the boss) shall...

Among other responsibilities:

- make sure that you (the worker) follow the law and the company safety rules;
- make sure that you work safely and use any required safety equipment;
- advise you of the existence of any potential or actual danger to your health and safety that they are aware of;
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect you.

Who’s your supervisor?

Under the law, a supervisor is any person with authority over you; in other words, any person who can direct you (the worker) when and how to do a task. Sometimes the supervisor is the same person you call boss.

Workers (that’s you) shall...

- comply with the Act, any applicable Regulations and the company health and safety rules;
- use all machines and equipment the way you were trained to use them;
- use any required personal protective equipment (such as hard hat, goggles, gloves and safety glasses) the way you were trained. Don’t change it in any way;
- report any hazards you see to the boss as well as anything you think may contravene the Act, its Regulations or company safety rules;
- always work safely and not fool around.

Key Points

⚠️ Your employer and your supervisor must do everything reasonable to protect your health and safety.

⚠️ You must comply with the law, follow company rules and always work safely.

⚠️ You must report any hazards to your supervisor or employer.

The Internal Responsibility System

These duties and responsibilities for employers, supervisors and workers overlap and complement each other. Together, they create what’s known as the Internal Responsibility System or IRS.

Simply put, the IRS means everyone in the workplace has a role to play and a duty to be proactive. Every worker who sees a health and safety problem in the workplace has a duty to report it. And, once a hazard has been identified, the employer and supervisors have a duty to deal with it.

That’s what the law requires.
Anytime you start a new job, your employer and supervisor have a duty to give you information about the hazards in your job and make sure you have any safety training required by law.

Types of Training

There are two kinds of training you must receive.

General workplace safety information and/or training alerts you to basic safety concerns and procedures in your workplace, for instance:

- company safety rules
- emergency procedures
- first aid locations and procedures

Specific safety training teaches you how to do your job safely and how to use any machines your job requires, for instance:

- procedures—how to do the job
- how to use protective guards and safety features
- lockout procedures

Animal Shelter

A young worker with a love of animals thought she had it made—a part-time job at a local animal shelter.

But, after only a few months, she fell ill and had to be hospitalized for several weeks.

What went wrong? The girl had caught a severe lung disease from handling birds and their cages. The shelter gave her no information on the biological hazards of working with different animals, and didn’t provide her with protective equipment like breathing masks and rubber gloves.

If your job involves working with or near hazardous chemicals, your employer will also have to provide you with a special type of training called WHMIS. (See pages 16 and 17)
PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

Your employer must ensure you have the protective equipment your job requires, and your supervisor must make sure you use it and that you use it properly.

The type of personal protective equipment you need will depend on the job you are doing. A few of the most common:

- Hard hats and safety boots are required at all construction sites and may be required in factories.
- Safety glasses and dust masks are required when working on many different types of machines.
- Suitable protective gloves are required in workplaces that deal with biological hazards and chemicals.
- Hearing protection is required in noisy workplaces.

Using your protective equipment is not an option. The law and your company safety rules require it.

Hygiene and Emergency Facilities

Apart from personal protective equipment, some jobs will require you to use hygiene facilities such as hand wash stations and disinfectant soaps. This reduces the chance of toxic substances being absorbed or ingested into the body. They may also prevent hazardous agents from being carried away from the workplace.

In some other jobs, you will need to know how to use emergency facilities such as first aid kits and eye wash stations.

Make sure you know where these facilities are located and how to use them.

Key Points

⚠️ Your employer must provide you with information and/or training on the general and specific hazards in your job.

⚠️ You must have and know how to use any protective equipment or facilities your job requires.

⚠️ This program is not the information or training your employer is required to give you.

The Young Worker Awareness program is not the health and safety information or training your employer and supervisor must provide! It’s just a start.
You can expect...

WHMIS training

Many workplaces either use or store materials that can hurt you. And you might not know it.

Many hazards like battery acid, tanks of compressed gas and poisons seem obvious.

But what about paints? Lubricating oils? Cleaning products? Don’t assume they are safe. Hazardous materials can also be found in many of these products.

You have the Right to Know what these materials are, how they can hurt you and how you can protect yourself.

That’s what WHMIS, the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System tells you.

The WHMIS Regulation does not cover all hazardous materials. For instance, the Pesticides Act covers pesticides used in landscaping. And some hazardous materials have their own specific regulations. See page 23, Designated Substance Regulations.

The 8 WHMIS symbols tell you ‘What's in this stuff?’ and how it might hurt you.

Health club

A young worker at a health club noticed a WHMIS symbol on the liquid she used to wash down the handball court.

She wondered if this might account for the headaches and nausea she'd been having.

She asked the manager, who found the product’s MSDS. It stated the liquid should be diluted and only used in well-ventilated areas. As well, rubber gloves and a respirator were required to prevent the chemical entering the body. The chemical's effects included headaches, nausea, convulsions and death.

The manager decided to use a less hazardous cleaner and the young worker's headaches and nausea disappeared.
What WHMIS requires

WHMIS is a national law, a regulation and a requirement under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It applies in any workplace where hazardous materials are used or stored.

WHMIS requires three things before a hazardous material can be used in a workplace:

**Warning Labels**

The hazardous material's container must have a warning LABEL that tells you what hazardous materials are in the container, what the hazards are, how to use it safely, and first aid procedures.

The label must include a WHMIS symbol for any hazards that material has. There are eight of these hazard symbols. (See Tell me more, page 26, WHMIS symbols, for details on the symbols.)

If the material is put into another container, the new container must be labeled with similar information. (This is called a workplace label.)

**Material Safety Data Sheets**

The hazardous material must come with a MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet). The MSDS tells you about the material, its hazards, how to use it safely and what to do in an emergency.

The employer must have a current (not more than 3 years old) copy of the MSDS for every hazardous material in the workplace. The MSDS must be located where workers can find and read it easily.

See How to Read a MSDS, page 27, in Tell me more, for more information.

**Training**

Any worker who works with or near hazardous materials must be trained how to recognize the WHMIS symbols and how to read and understand the warning labels and the Material Safety Data Sheet.

Key Points

⚠️ WHMIS is a Regulation that applies to all workplaces where hazardous materials are stored or used.

⚠️ Materials covered by WHMIS must have a warning label.

⚠️ Your employer must have an up-to-date MSDS for any hazardous materials used or stored.

⚠️ Your employer must train you in the WHMIS system as it applies to your workplace.
Injuries and illnesses are preventable. And a workplace that takes its health and safety duties seriously can reduce exposure to hazards leading to injuries or illnesses.

But what happens if there is an injury at work?

What happens if something in your job makes you sick?

You must report it to your supervisor!

Why don't young workers report injuries?

- Your employer may be a family friend and you’re afraid they might be insulted if you report an injury.
- You might be afraid the boss will think you can’t do the job properly if you report the injury.
- You might think the injury is not very serious.
- You might be afraid your co-workers will think less of you.

Why you should report any injury or illness

- To make sure you get the correct medical treatment right away.
- To make sure you receive the appropriate compensation for your injury or illness without delay. (See next page.)
- So the cause of the injury or illness can be investigated and corrected to prevent it happening to someone else or causing a more serious injury.
Ontario’s Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA)

The WSIA is another important law for occupational health and safety. It was created to promote safe and healthy workplaces, help workers who have been injured or made ill from their work return to their jobs quickly and safely, and to provide compensation benefits while they are off work.

The WSIA is administered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

In all but the most minor cases, you and your employer have a responsibility to report a work-related injury or illness to the WSIB promptly and to file a claim correctly (see details below).

Under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, if either you or your employer delays or fails to report a work-related injury or illness, you may be ineligible to receive compensation and your employer may be fined.

In all cases of injury or illness at the workplace.

Get first aid treatment right away.

Tell your boss about any injury as soon as possible, no matter how small.

Tell your boss about any illness or condition (like a skin rash, for instance) that you believe happened because of work.

If you lose wages or require health care treatment because of the injury or illness, you and your boss must file a claim (it’s called a Form 7) with the WSIB. If you are less than 16 years old, a parent or guardian will have to sign part of the form.

You can choose your own doctor, but you cannot change doctors without the WSIB’s approval.

Your doctor will send a report on your injury or illness (it’s called a Form 8) to the WSIB.

The WSIB will contact you once your claim has been filed. You have to follow any instructions from the WSIB, fill out any forms promptly, and cooperate in your health care treatment and safe return to work.

If your claim is denied, you have the right to appeal.

Key Points

⚠️ The WSIB provides compensation for lost wages and health care costs caused by workplace injuries and illnesses.

⚠️ If you are injured or made ill, you must follow the steps laid out on the WSIB In Case of Injury at Work poster.

⚠️ Don’t be afraid or reluctant to report any workplace injury or illness you think was caused by your work.
Your employer and your supervisor have a duty to protect your health and safety. Most work hard to do just that.

But, in the end, you have a duty to protect yourself.

Starting a new job? Just got transferred to a new position? Get answers from your supervisor!

1. What company health and safety rules should I know about to do my job safely?
2. What are the hazards I should know about? How does the company control these hazards? What should I do to control them?
3. What safety training will I get? Do I need WHMIS training? When will I get it?
4. Is there any part of the job that needs special training (like operating a forklift)?
5. What safety gear will I need to use or wear? What training will I get on how to use and take care of it?
6. Where are the fire extinguishers and emergency equipment? What training will I get in emergency procedures? When?
7. Where are the emergency exits? Where is the first aid station? Who is the trained first aid person in my work area?
8. Is there a Joint Health and Safety Committee or Representative? Who and where is that person?
9. Are there regular health and safety meetings?
Got questions or a concern but don’t know who to talk to?

- Your supervisor (boss) is the first person you should see. By law, your employer is responsible for your workplace health and safety, including making sure you know about the hazards in your job.

- Talk to the worker member on the company’s Joint Health and Safety Committee (or the Health and Safety Representative in a small workplace).

- If your company has a health and safety department (many large companies do), see one of their health and safety professionals. It’s part of their job to answer questions and give advice.

- If there’s a union, there will be a health and safety unit or representative to advise workers and monitor health and safety concerns.

If none of this works, you still have options!

- If you are a student working in a co-op placement, talk to your co-op teacher.


- Contact the appropriate Health and Safety Association. See the list on pages 29 and 30 for details.

- You can call the Ministry of Labour. You don’t have to give your name.

Key Points

⚠️ Know your Rights and your Duties.

⚠️ Ask questions until you get answers you understand.

⚠️ Always Work Smart! Always Work Safe!
Federal Workplaces...

All jobs in the workplaces listed here are covered by the federal government’s Canada Labour Code Part II and its Regulations.

If you work in one of these workplaces you have Rights and Responsibilities that are very similar to those you would have under Ontario’s Occupational Health and Safety Act.

For more information on federal workplaces, contact one of the health and safety associations listed at the back of this book, or check out Occupational Health and Safety at http://info.load-otea.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca.

- Airline (all, including small charter companies)
- Airport
- Atomic Energy Facility
- Bank (but not a Trust company)
- Bus Company *
- Cable Company
- Courier Company *
- Crown Corporations (e.g. Canada Post)
- Federal Government Department (e.g. Agriculture Canada, Parks Canada, Health Canada)
- Feed Mill
- Grain Elevator
- Pipeline *
- Railway* (includes almost all in Ontario)
- Radio Station
- Shipping Company (e.g. lake freighter)
- Telephone Company (e.g. Bell Canada)
- Television Station
- Trucking Company *

* if the company transports goods or people across provincial boundaries
Under Ontario’s Occupational Health and Safety Act, there are Regulations that give very specific rules for certain occupations and industrial sectors, and for working with many types of hazardous materials. Find out which if any of the Regulations listed below apply to your workplace and your job.

INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

MINES & MINING PLANTS

OIL AND GAS OFFSHORE

HEALTH CARE & RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

WINDOW CLEANING

DIVING

FIREFIGHTERS

TEACHERS

UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS & TEACHING ASSISTANTS

ROLL-OVER PROTECTIVE DEVICES

CONTROL OF EXPOSURE TO BIOLOGICAL OR CHEMICAL AGENTS

X-RAY SAFETY

WHMIS

DESIGNATED SUBSTANCES

Designated Substance Regulations (DSR)

Most workplace hazardous materials are covered by the WHMIS Regulation and by the Control of Exposure to Biological or Chemical Agents Regulation. But there are eleven hazardous materials for which the government of Ontario has written special rules. These materials are called designated substances and, except for asbestos, each has its own Regulation. (There are two Regulations that deal with asbestos.) The goal of these Regulations is to limit how much of the material a worker can be exposed to.

There are DSRs for:

- Asbestos
- Asbestos on Construction Projects and in Buildings and Repair Operations
- Silica
- Isocyanates
- Benzene
- Arsenic
- Ethylene Oxide
- Lead
- Coke Oven Emissions
- Acrylonitrile
- Mercury
- Vinyl Chloride
Work Refusals...

Let’s face it, when the boss or supervisor tells you to do a task, you probably don’t want to say no.

But if you’re afraid the task is dangerous, if you think it can hurt you or another worker, you may need to say no.

But first, talk to your boss or supervisor. Explain your concerns about the safety of the task. Most times, you can work it out.

But if you don’t, and you still believe the work is unsafe, you are protected by the legal Right to Refuse.

If you do refuse, be polite but firm. The Occupational Health and Safety Act spells out the steps that you and your employer must follow. When the right steps have been followed, if your boss disciplines you for refusing to do unsafe work, it is a contravention of the law. You can file a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Do all workers have the right to refuse unsafe work?

Yes, but for some workers this right is limited. Certain workers who have a responsibility to protect public safety cannot refuse unsafe work if the danger in question is a normal part of the job or if the refusal would endanger the life, health or safety of another person. These workers can include police officers, firefighters and certain health care workers.

The Right to Refuse is important. Study the process and talk to your JHSC member or worker Health and Safety Representative if you have any questions.
What happens when you refuse?

If you decide to refuse a task because you think it is unsafe, you must report your refusal to your supervisor or employer.

Once you have done this, your supervisor or employer must call in a Joint Health and Safety Committee worker member or Health and Safety representative (or another worker if a worker member/representative is not available).

The supervisor or employer must investigate your concern in front of you and the worker representative.

If your supervisor or employer agrees the work is hazardous, he or she takes corrective action and you return to work.

If the supervisor or employer doesn't agree, but you still believe you have reasonable grounds to refuse the work, then a Ministry of Labour Inspector must be notified.

While you wait for the Inspector to contact you, your supervisor or employer may tell another worker to do the job you refused, but must tell the other worker about your refusal and the reasons for it.

The Inspector will investigate the work refusal and must give a decision in writing. The Inspector may order corrective action or decide that the job is unlikely to endanger the worker. The decision can be appealed by either the employer or the worker.

While the investigation goes on, you can be assigned reasonable other work by your supervisor or employer.

Does the worker have reasonable grounds to believe the work endangers health or safety?

- YES
  - Ministry of Labour Inspector called.
  - Worker may be assigned reasonable alternative work.
  - Inspector investigates in consultation with the worker, supervisor or employer and worker representative.
  - Written decision by Inspector.
  - Likely to endanger? Corrective action as ordered.
  - Not likely to endanger? Worker returns to work.
  - Inspector’s order can be appealed by worker or by the employer.

- NO
  - Worker returns to work.
WHMIS symbols...

The WHMIS symbols tell you the kind of hazard in the container the WHMIS symbol is on. You should be able to recognize each of these symbols and know what they mean.

CLASS A - COMPRESSED GAS
A material (cylinder) with this symbol can explode and take off like a rocket!

CLASS B - FLAMMABLE AND COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL
A material with this symbol can burst into flame very suddenly.

CLASS C - OXIDIZING MATERIAL
A material with this symbol will feed any fire, making it much hotter and larger.

CLASS D1 - MATERIALS CAUSING IMMEDIATE AND SERIOUS TOXIC EFFECTS
A material with this symbol will cause acute and serious poisoning.

CLASS D2 - MATERIALS CAUSING OTHER TOXIC EFFECTS
A material with this symbol can cause slow poisoning or other illness.

CLASS D3 - BIOHAZARDOUS INFECTIOUS MATERIAL
A material with this symbol can give you a serious disease.

CLASS E - CORROSIVE MATERIAL
A material with this symbol can seriously harm your eyes and burn your skin or lungs.

CLASS F - DANGEROUSLY REACTIVE MATERIAL
A material with this symbol may explode if mixed with other chemicals or dropped.
How to Read a MSDS...

Employers must keep Material Safety Data Sheets for any hazardous material used in the workplace and must place them where workers like you can find and read them.

A MSDS tells you about the hazards of a material, how to use the material safely and what to do if there is an emergency.

When you read a MSDS, look for answers to these questions:

1. Do you have the right MSDS for the material you're working with?
2. Is the MSDS up-to-date? (If it's more than 3 years old, it's out-of-date.)
3. What is (are) the material's hazard(s)?
   - Can the material burn or explode?
   - Is the material an unstable chemical? What conditions make it unstable?
   - Is the chemical reactive with other chemicals? Which ones? What happens if they get mixed?
4. How can the material harm you?
   - What happens if you breathe the material or get it on your skin?
   - What kind of injury or illness can the material cause?
5. Do you need protective equipment when handling or using the material? What equipment? Where do you find it? Do you know how to use it?
6. Are there any special handling precautions?
7. What are the emergency procedures for an accident, for instance, if the material burns, explodes, spills or leaks?
8. What emergency equipment is required and where is that equipment located?

Never work with a hazardous material until all of these questions, and any others you can think of, are answered in a way that you understand!
The Occupational Health and Safety Act gives you the Right to Participate in health and safety decision-making in your workplace. Depending on the size of your workplace, you can participate through a Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or as a worker Health and Safety Representative.

**Workplaces with 20 or more workers or where a designated substance regulation applies**

Virtually all workplaces covered by the Act with 20 or more regularly employed workers must have a JHSC made up of management and worker members. The committee members work together to identify and recommend solutions to health and safety problems.

The main purpose of a JHSC is to make sure that all health and safety concerns are brought into the open and kept there until they are resolved. One of the committee’s important duties is to do regular inspections for health and safety hazards in the workplace.

At least half of the JHSC members must be workers who are chosen by other workers or, where there is one, by the trade union. The employer selects management members.

**Workplaces with 6 to 19 workers and where there is no Joint Health and Safety Committee**

Not all workplaces are required to have a joint health and safety committee. In workplaces or construction projects where 6 to 19 workers are regularly employed and where there is no Joint Health and Safety Committee, a health and safety representative of the workers is required instead. This Representative is chosen by workers, and deals with health and safety problems in the workplace in much the same way as the JHSC.

For all health and safety concerns, talk to your supervisor and your worker Health and Safety Representative or members of the JHSC. Ask questions and keep asking them until you get answers that you understand.
HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSOCIATIONS
(Current to January, 2001)

Construction Safety Association of Ontario
21 Voyager Court South,
Etobicoke, Ontario, M9W 5M7
Tel: (416) 674 - 2726 or 1 - 800 - 781-2726
E-mail: info@csao.org
Web: http://www.csao.org

Education Safety Association of Ontario
4950 Yonge Street, Suite #1505
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K1
Tel: (416) 250 - 8005 or 1 - 877 - 732 - 3726
E-mail: esao@esao.on.ca
Web: http://www.esao.on.ca/

Electrical & Utilities Safety Association of Ontario
220 Traders Blvd East,
Mississauga, Ontario, L4Z 1W7
Tel: (905) 890 - 1011 or 1 - 800 - 263 - 5024
E-mail: eusa@eusa.on.ca
Web: http://www.eusa.on.ca/

Farm Safety Association Inc.
Suite 22-23, 340 Woodlawn Road West,
Guelph, Ontario, N1H 7K6
Tel: (519) 823 - 5600 or 1 - 800 - 361 - 8855
E-mail: info@farmsafety.ca
Web: http://www.farmsafety.ca

Health Care Health & Safety Association
4950 Yonge Street, Suite 1505,
Toronto, Ontario M2N 6K1
Tel: (416) 250 - 7444 or 1 - 877 - 250 - 7444
Web: http://www.hchsa.on.ca/

Industrial Accident Prevention Association
250 Yonge Street, 28th Floor,
Toronto, ON M5B 2N4
Tel: (416) 506 - 8888 or 1 - 800 - 406 - 4272
E-mail: feedback@iapa.on.ca
Web: http://www.iapa.on.ca/

Mines and Aggregates Safety and Health Association
P O Box 2050, Station Main,
690 McKeown Avenue, North Bay,
Ontario, P1B 9P1
Tel: (705) 474 - 7233
E-mail: info@masha.on.ca
Web: http://www.masha.on.ca/

Municipal Health & Safety Association of Ontario
220 Traders Blvd. East
Mississauga, Ontario, L4Z 1W7
Tel: (905) 507 - 1882
E-mail: info@mhsao.com
Web: http://www.mhsao.com/

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers
15 Gervais Drive, Suite 603
Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 1Y8
Tel: (416) 449 - 0009 or 1 - 877 - 817 - 0336
E-mail: rwareing@ohcow.on.ca
Web: http://www.ohcow.on.ca

Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association
690 McKeown Avenue, P.O. Box 2050,
North Bay ON Canada P1B 9P1
Tel: (705) 474 - 7233
E-mail: info@ofswa.on.ca
Web: http://www.ofswa.on.ca/

Ontario Service Safety Alliance
4950 Yonge Street, Suite 1500,
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K1
Tel: (416) 250 - 9111 or 1 - 888 - 478 - 6772
E-mail: info@ossa.com
Web: http://www.ossa.com
Pulp and Paper Health and Safety Association
P.O. Box 2050 Station Main, 690 McKeown Avenue
North Bay, Ontario, P1B 9P1
Tel: (705) 474 - 7233
E-mail: info@pphsa.on.ca
Web: http://www.pphsa.on.ca/

Transportation Health & Safety Association of Ontario
555 Dixon Road, Suite 101,
Etobicoke, Ontario, M9W 1H8
Tel: (416) 242 - 4771 or 1 - 800 - 263 - 5016
E-mail: thsao@echo-on.net
Web: http://www.thsao.on.ca/

Workers Health & Safety Centre
15 Gervais Dr., Suite 802,
Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 1Y8
Tel: (416) 441 - 1939 or 1 - 888 - 869 - 7950
E-mail: postmaster@whsc.on.ca
Web: http://www.whsc.on.ca

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Human Resources Development Canada
Federal – to contact the HRDC office nearest you, look in the local telephone book Blue Pages.
Web: http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/

Ontario Ministry of Labour
Provincial - To contact the ministry office nearest you, look in the local telephone book Blue Pages.
Tel: 1 - 800 - 268 - 8013 (province-wide)
Web: http://www.gov.on.ca/lab/main.htm

Ontario Workplace Safety & Insurance Board
200 Front St. West,
Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3J1
Head office:
Tel: (416) 344 - 1000 or 1 - 800 - 387 - 5540
TTY: 1-800-387-0050
Prevention:
Tel: (416) 344 - 1016 or 1 - 800 - 663 - 6639
E-mail: prevention@wsib.on.ca
Web: http://www.wsib.on.ca

OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
Inquiries Service, 250 Main Street East,
Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 1H6
(905) 572 - 4400 or 1 - 800 - 263 - 8466
E-mail: inquiries@ccohs.ca
Web: http://www.ccohs.ca

Office of the Worker Adviser
123 Edward Street, Suite 1300
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1E2
Tel: 1 - 800 - 435 - 8980 (English)
Tel: 1 - 800 - 661 - 6365 (French)
E-mail: webowa@mol.gov.on.ca
Web: http://www.gov.on.ca/lab/owa

Employer Adviser
101 Bloor Street West, Suite 501,
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2Z7
Tel: (416) 327 - 0020 or 1 - 800 - 435 - 8980
E-mail: weboea@mol.gov.on.ca
Web: www.gov.on.ca/lab/oea

Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic
180 Dundas Street West, Suite 201,
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1Z8
Tel: (416) 971 - 8832

Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA)
3300 Bloor St West, 4th Floor,
West Tower,
Toronto, Ontario, M8X 2X4
Tel: (416) 325 - 2000 or 1 - 877 - 682 - 8772
Web: http://www.tssa.org

Canadian Standards Association (CSA) International
178 Rexdale Boulevard,
Toronto, Ontario, M9W 1R3
Tel: (416) 747 - 4058 or 1 - 800 - 463 - 6727
E-mail: info@csa-international.org
Web: http://www.csa.org
Useful Internet Sites

**yworker.com**

This is the home web site for the Young Worker Awareness Program. Check it out for more information, stories about young workers who’ve been injured, free computer wallpaper, posters and interactive quizzes.

**Work Safe Smart Move**


This is young worker oriented site created for the state of Western Australia. Sure, it’s a long way away, but being safe on the job is a worldwide concern.

The site features *Think Safe Steps*, online self-tests (you can even get a health and safety certificate) and detailed safety information on jobs in industries like hairdressing, construction, community services, hospitality and tourism, manufacturing, business, agriculture and retail stores.

**Safe Work Safe Kids**

http://www.osha.gov/, then click on the link to Safe Work Safe Kids

Young worker health and safety is a concern in the United States too. This site features information and materials on how young workers can protect themselves. Check out the “Teen Workers’ Bill of Rights.”

**www.worksafebc.com**

This is the home site for the British Columbia Worker Compensation Board. It provides statistics, programs and information for young workers.

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**Acronyms**

- **DSR** - Designated Substance Regulation
- **IRS** - Internal Responsibility System
- **JHSC** - Joint Health and Safety Committee
- **MOL** - Ministry of Labour
- **MSDS** - Material Safety Data Sheet
- **OHSA** - Occupational Health and Safety Act (the Act)
- **PPE** - Personal Protective Equipment
- **RAC** - Recognize, Assess and Control workplace hazards
- **WHMIS** - Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System
- **WSIA** - Workplace Safety and Insurance Act
- **WSIB** - Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
We dedicate this program to all the young workers who have been injured or lost their lives in the workplace.

We would like to thank the many volunteers and staff who share their time, experiences and dedication in the delivery of this program to Ontario’s young people.

Funded by

Workplace Safety & Insurance Board

Commission de la sécurité professionnelle et de l’assurance contre les accidents du travail