

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY SPECIAL ISSUE *magazine*

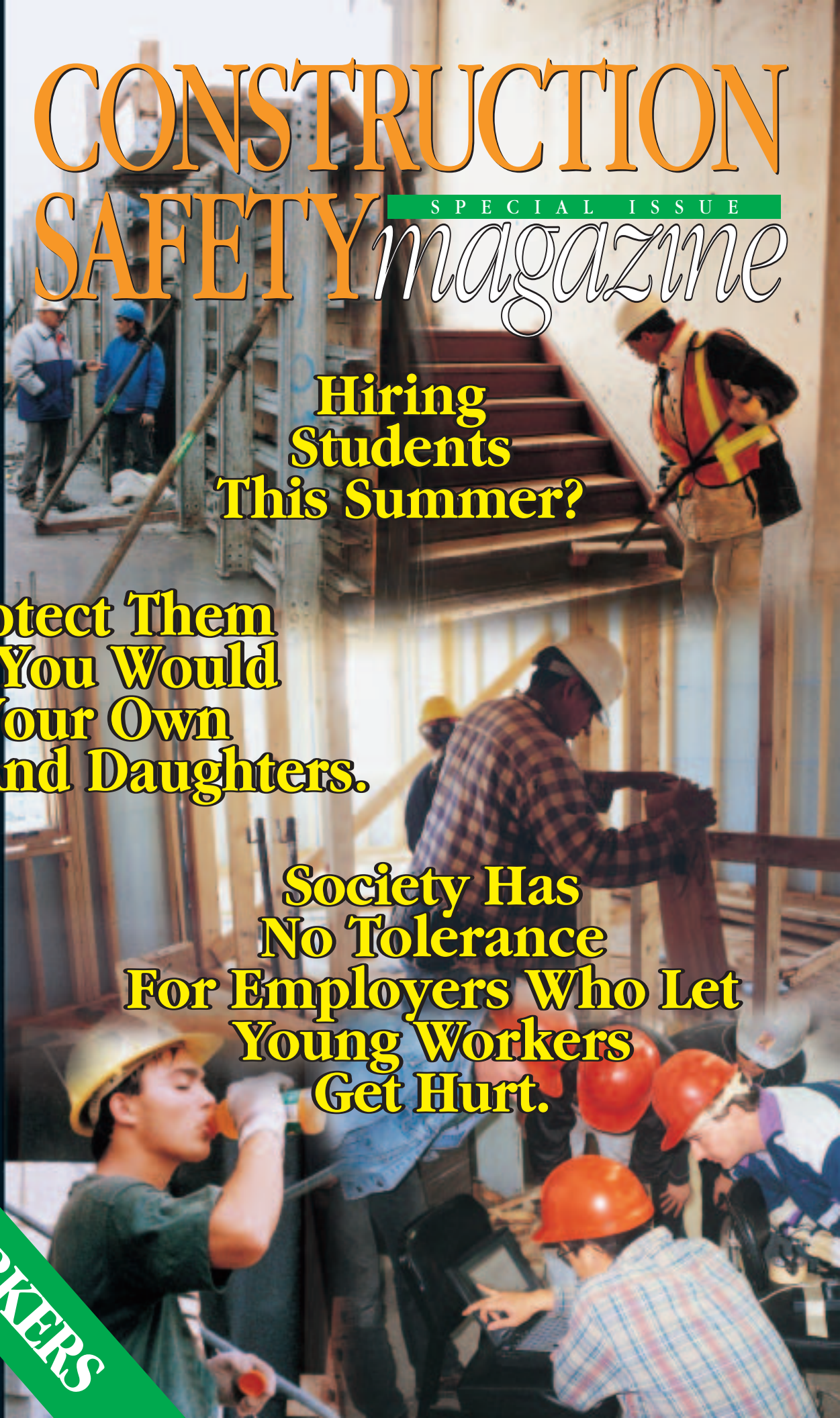


**Hiring
Students
This Summer?**

**Protect Them
As You Would
Your Own
Sons And Daughters.**

**Society Has
No Tolerance
For Employers Who Let
Young Workers
Get Hurt.**

YOUNG WORKERS



Young Workers

What factors put young workers at risk?

by John Sammut, CRSP, Manager, Training & Advisory, CSAO

*“The
immortality
factor comes
into play for
young
workers...”*

A young worker is defined by Statistics Canada as a person between the ages of 15 and 24. Comparing young workers (15-24) to older workers (25-65) reveals a correlation between injuries and age.

Why are young workers at greater risk than older workers?

Type of industry is one factor. High-risk sectors such as construction tend to create unfamiliar hazards for young workers. In the year 2000, young workers in Ontario construction accounted for 1,084 (18%) lost-time injuries out of an industry total for all ages of 5,998. The frequency of these injuries decreased among older age groups in the industry.

The Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Department has determined that the first few months on the job tend to increase the risk of personal injury. This conclusion supports the need for worker orientation and training *before* work starts.

Alberta recommends several measures for reducing risks to young workers:

- intervention during the first few weeks of employment
- training to ensure that safe work practices are effectively communicated and applied
- site orientation
- an industry-wide basic accreditation training program.

Too often, the failure to provide competent supervision, to deliver training, to follow acceptable industry practices, and to take reasonable precautions can lead to occupational injury, illness, or death. These preventable accidents impact society in many ways. Not only the physical but also the psychological effects can last a lifetime.

Some risks and hazards are connected not only with new workers but also with new employers,

as shown by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Employers currently in business and expanding their operations do so without increasing their frequency rate, even though they hire new workers. But new employers experience high accident rates.

The Farm Safety Association of Ontario (FSAO) has identified two factors that help explain why young workers have more accidents than older workers. One is the *immortality factor* that comes into play for young workers who consider themselves invincible.

The other factor is the lack of experience and training. New workers often try to create a good impression by working hard and fast, can't recognize and assess hazards, and are reluctant to report unsafe conditions for fear of reprisal from their employers.

In addition to these factors are the physical demands placed on young workers, especially in labour-intensive jobs such as construction.

Entry-level training programs can help to offset some of the risks to young workers. Investment in entry-level training can reduce injuries to young workers now and lead to safer, healthier workplaces in future. In several industries and jurisdictions, entry-level training has improved accident prevention by increasing awareness and compliance. The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) in place across Canada is one example of how training has helped to reduce occupational hazards.

Certification or accreditation of employers in workplace health and safety is another approach that has proven successful in Alberta and Nova Scotia.

Although these new policies come with a price tag, the long-term benefits will be worth the investment, especially in protecting young construction workers from occupational injury, disease, and death.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Young workers constitute the largest percentage of the part-time, temporary, seasonal, contract, and casual workforce.
- More than 40% of young workers are in businesses with fewer than 20 employees. On average these companies have higher injury rates than larger companies.
- In Ontario only 40% of young workers receive health and safety training before starting their job or within their first week of work.
- Only about half of parents talk to their children about safety at work and advise them to be cautious.

Attention Ontario Contractors



**Start young workers
off right.**

**Tell them... Show them...
Watch them.**

**They could be your
sons and daughters.**

Make sure they know
✓ hazards to watch out for
✓ safeguards to follow
✓ people to ask.

As an employer in Ontario you have duties under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

The Act states that an employer must “take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker” [Section 25(2)(h)].

This blanket requirement has been used to prosecute everything from failure to provide guardrails to failure to provide adequate supervision and training. Take the time to review Part III, “Duties of Employers and Other Persons,” in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Under the Act, the construction regulation (Ontario Regulation 213/91) spells out additional requirements for employers. Some of these are summarized in the following pages.

Statistics show that a significant percentage of all injuries to workers occur within their first thirty days on the job. This fact highlights the importance of training and orientation—especially for young workers.

Inexperienced workers are generally involved in more accidents than veteran workers. Although experience increases safety awareness, early education in health, safety, and job skills can improve the safety record for new workers right from the start.

Accident prevention training should begin as soon as the young worker joins your company. Training is a vital part of orientation. Your company’s health and safety policy and program should provide for both procedures.

You have a duty to train new workers *before* they start work

The law requires training in

- WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System)
- fall protection
- specific tasks such as traffic control, confined space entry, and window cleaning
- emergency procedures, including fall rescue
- specific equipment such as powder-actuated tools, chainsaws, forklifts, hoisting equipment, fire extinguishers, scissor lifts, and other powered elevating work platforms.

New workers must be told—and, if necessary, trained and shown—what is expected of them in

- work performance
- safe operation of tools and equipment
- procedures around hazardous materials
- proper use of any required personal protective equipment and clothing.

Training is also necessary

- when a worker is assigned to a new job
- whenever equipment, materials, or procedures are new to the worker
- when inadequate performance is observed.



New workers *need* orientation

- 1) Give the new worker a copy of the company health and safety policy.
- 2) Explain the project and the worker's duties.
- 3) Alert the worker to any hazards on site and the protective measures required.
- 4) Explain requirements for personal protective equipment.
- 5) Outline procedures for emergencies and accident reporting.
- 6) Show the worker where to find first aid kit, fire extinguishers, and other emergency equipment.
- 7) Introduce the new worker to his or her supervisor.
- 8) Show the new worker around the site.



A new worker can absorb only so much information in the first few days. A copy of the company's health and safety policy and program can help by reinforcing the points covered during orientation (for sample policies, call Customer Service at 1-800-781-2726 and ask for DS030).

Wherever possible, use the buddy system to follow up on orientation. Pairing a new worker with a veteran can help each to work more safely. You will reinforce the new worker's training and raise the veteran's safety awareness at the same time.

Learn how young workers *think*

Surveys conducted by the WSIB and other organizations indicate that young workers have some thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes that can be dangerous.

"I'll do almost anything my employer asks me to."

"I trust my employer not to make me do anything unsafe or dangerous."

"I assume the equipment and chemicals I work with are safe."

"I don't know much about health and safety rights and responsibilities."

"I don't want to ask too many questions. I may lose my job."

"Protective equipment isn't cool. I won't wear it unless someone makes me."

"I don't want my boss to think I complain too much about hazards."

"I wish I could ask someone my own age."

"The training I get is basically on the job. Not much of it involves health or safety."

"It's not an injury unless I can't do my job anymore."

"I've got to work hard and fast. I don't want anyone to think I'm lazy."

"I'll make do with whatever tools and equipment they give me."

"Everybody talks about safety. But when it comes to getting the job done they don't have time for it."

Know what *works* with young workers

Again, studies conducted by the WSIB and other organizations indicate how to get young employees to listen, follow instructions, and understand why working safely is important.

"Show me realistic cause-and-effect examples of what can go wrong."

"Show me real situations, including blood and gore."

"Pay me for the time you want me to spend training or reading the stuff you give me."

"Give me time at work to read the policy rather than telling me to read it on my own."

"Don't just tell me to be careful. Show me how to do it right."

"Why should I wear this equipment if other guys don't?"

Encourage them to *ask* questions

Learning by trial and error can be dangerous. When they have questions about equipment, materials, or procedure, young workers should feel comfortable asking you or your foreman for answers. In the same vein, encourage young workers to report hazards and injuries.

Remember what *you* were like at their age



Explain common construction *hazards*

- ✓ **FALLS** Train workers in fall protection and keep records of training.
- ✓ **LADDERS** Warn workers about ladders not properly set up, maintained, or used.
- ✓ **HOUSEKEEPING** Show how poor housekeeping and storage can cause accidents.
- ✓ **ELECTRICAL CONTACT** Describe how workers can be hurt or killed when ladders, scaffolds, or long material such as pipe or lumber contacts overhead powerlines or when careless excavation strikes underground powerlines.
- ✓ **TRENCHES** Warn young workers never to enter any trench that's more than four feet deep unless it's properly shored, sloped, or protected by a trench box.
- ✓ **REVERSING VEHICLES** Show young workers the blind spots that may block an operator's view to the side, rear, or front of vehicles and equipment.
- ✓ **TOOLS/EQUIPMENT** Where necessary, demonstrate operation and maintenance. Tell young workers to report faulty tools and equipment.
- ✓ **SCAFFOLDS** Point out that scaffolds must be fully planked, braced, and properly erected.
- ✓ **GUARDRAILS** Remember to install guardrails wherever a worker may fall more than three metres and other protection is not provided.
- ✓ **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** Explain WHMIS and other requirements.
- ✓ **TRAFFIC CONTROL** Give written and oral instructions to anyone assigned to control traffic.
- ✓ **PPE** Demonstrate the proper use and maintenance of any personal protective equipment required on the job.
- ✓ **CONFINED SPACES** Warn young workers never to enter a confined space without appropriate training.

CSAO has print, video, and digital products covering all of these topics, including *New on the Job* (orientation video) and *Your Construction Job* (brochure for new workers). Training programs are also available. Contact Customer Service at 1-800-781-2726 or visit www.csao.org

Know the law

One book is absolutely essential for what employers and workers need to know about health and safety on site. That's the *Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations for Construction Projects*.

Regulations covering every aspect of construction health and safety are spelled out in the "green book."

Employers are required to post a copy on site.

The green book is available from Publications Ontario at 416-326-5300 or from CSAO at 416-674-2726 or 1-800-781-2726.





Employing Young Workers

Tips for... Supervisors

Remember your first few days on the job?

How much did you know then?

How much were you taught by your supervisor?

Legislation

Section 27 of Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) outlines your duties as a supervisor.

The law says that you, as a supervisor, must:

1. Ensure that your workers comply with the provisions of the OHSA and its *Regulations*.
2. Ensure that your workers use protective devices and wear the required personal protective equipment.
3. Let your workers know about any potential or actual dangers in the workplace.
4. If required by a regulation made under the OHSA, provide your workers with written instructions where necessary to protect them.
5. Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to ensure the health and safety of your workers.

Did You Know?

- ... that every year more than 50,000 young workers aged 15–24 report injuries to the WSIB? *
- ... that young workers are 24% more likely to be injured on the job than other groups, particularly during the first few days of employment? *
- ... that young workers often are unable to recognize hazards?
- ... that young workers tend not to ask questions because they don't want to look "stupid"?
- ... that young workers are an asset to your workplace – with fresh eyes, new ideas and good questions to ask?
- ... that young workers are easier to train and eager to work?
- ... that, as a supervisor, you are legally responsible for your workers?
- ... that Ontario students are learning about their workplace rights and responsibilities?
- ... that if you fail to comply with the OHSA, you could be subject to a fine or jail term?

* Source: Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (Ontario)

Here's What You Need To Do...

- Spend more time explaining the job, providing training and supervising young and new workers.
- Set and explain safety rules and ensure everyone follows them.
- Ensure all hazards are explained and complete job-specific safety training is provided before the work is assigned.
- Explain the importance of prompt reporting of unsafe conditions and health and safety concerns. Ensure they know it is a priority for you and tell them how to report the hazard so you can act on it immediately.
- Make yourself available to answer questions and provide advice.
- Lead by example: wear required protective devices and always reinforce safety on the job.
- Establish and maintain open lines of communication.



Source: Knox, A.B. *Helping Adults Learn*

The Construction Safety Association of Ontario (CSAO) offers three training programs that will be practical and useful to you as a supervisor.

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Classroom program

Learn why the act is important, how to find your way around in it, and what it means to you as a supervisor.

Basics of Supervising

Available in either classroom or home study format

Everything a supervisor needs to know about health and safety on the job:

- elements of supervising
- motivation and communication
- legal responsibilities
- health and safety programs
- site emergencies and accident investigation
- injuries and fatalities.

Health and Safety

Four interactive CDs available for the homebuilding or ICI sector

Topics cover

- personal protective equipment
- legislation
- site safety
- material handling and back care.

For more information, contact CSAO.



Construction Safety Association of Ontario

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Starting Points...

This list, though not comprehensive, outlines information you should cover with your young workers.

- Everyone is entitled to work in a healthy and safe work environment.
- Everyone has the responsibility to contribute to making and keeping the workplace safe.
- Asking for help when they are unsure.
- Proper equipment operation including the mandatory use of guards and lock-out systems.
- Emergency procedures including the location of fire exits, extinguishers and eye wash stations.
- How and when to use personal protective equipment.
- Your company's health and safety rules.
- Correct lifting techniques.
- Good housekeeping practices.

Training Techniques:

- Because people learn differently, use a variety of training techniques with your young worker.
- Guide your young worker through resources for health and safety information.
- Schedule sufficient time in the appropriate learning environment.
- Be hands-on, evaluate their learning and give them feedback.

Bright Ideas

- Host a new worker welcoming get together to celebrate their arrival.
- Give a guided tour of the entire workplace.
- Introduce new young workers to VIPs in the organization. This may include the Health and Safety Manager, Health and Safety Committee members or Health and Safety Representatives.
- Use articles and other information about workplace injuries and deaths that have occurred in other workplaces to reinforce the health and safety message.
- Continually reinforce the importance of health and safety.
- Put stickers on equipment warning young workers they shouldn't use it without training or supervision.
- Pair up your young worker with an experienced, safety-conscious worker.
- Review other tip sheets in this series, such as "Employing Young Workers – Tips for Employers".
- Recognize safe work practices and if safety rules are not observed, find out why.

Bottom Line

YOU have direct responsibility for the safety of your workers, but also a unique opportunity to be a role model for young workers just starting out. Be a part of creating tomorrow's safe and healthy workforce.