

SAFETY TALK

[young worker safety]

[This talk is for experienced employees who will work alongside young workers. Schedule this talk ideally one week to four weeks before summer students, interns or other young workers arrive in the workplace.]

Young workers, aged 15-24, are three to four times more likely to be hurt on the job within the first six months of employment as the average Canadian worker. *

In New Brunswick, an average 1,000 young workers are hurt in the workplace each year.

We want everyone to practise safety. But we want to especially look out for young workers. We want them to have a good start, learning lessons that will help keep them safe for life.

As experienced employees, we can each do our part to help young workers. In fact, we are legally obligated to do so. Under New Brunswick's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, we are each responsible for our own safety as well as the safety of others.

Young workers need extra training and supervision, and only as a team can we ensure they get the knowledge and support they need.

So how can you help young workers stay safe?

[Instructor: Encourage responses from participants.]

[Common answers]

“We can correct them when they make mistakes.”

[Response:] We want to ensure young workers are working as safely as possible. Always speak up if you see a young worker, or any worker, performing a task unsafely. Don't wait to tell a manager. Remind the worker how to work safely. Let young workers know you're available if they have any questions.

Friendly reminders let all workers know safety comes first.

“We can ensure they wear PPE properly.”

[Response:] Young workers may not remember how to properly fit glasses or choose the right respirator for the job. [Use examples specific to your workplace]. Show young workers how PPE works. Talk about why it's important. Ask if they understand, and if they have any other questions.

What happens if PPE doesn't fit properly? If you have real-life examples of workers hurt from improper PPE or lack of PPE, share the story and explain the consequences.

“We can give them extra training.”

“We can supervise them more.”

[Response:] Extra supervision will help ensure young workers perform tasks safely and properly. As employees with more experience, young workers look to you for advice and direction. Don't let them down. If they ask a question, answer it. If you don't have the answer, find someone who does. Take each question seriously.

Young workers want your feedback. Let them know if there is a better, safer way to perform a task. Offer opportunity for questions and comments, and provide positive feedback when young workers demonstrate safe practices.

“We can set a good example.”

“We can model safe behaviour.”

“We can mentor them.”

[Response:] Young workers learn by watching others. You set the example. Show young workers how you work safely. Never take shortcuts. Point out hazards when you see them, and take actions to correct them. Speak up when you see unsafe behaviour and get involved in health and safety programs.

When modelling safe behaviour, explain why it's important to you and others in the workplace. Explain how everyone works together to keep all workers safe.

“We can keep our workplace safe.”

[Response:] By showing we take safety seriously, young workers are more likely to take it seriously too. Keep our workplace clean and safe. Ensure tools and equipment are properly maintained and stored. Replace worn, unsafe parts when necessary. [Use examples specific to your workplace.]

As experienced employees, we may not notice the everyday tasks we do to keep ourselves and others safe. Give more thought to these daily routines and practices and talk about it with young workers.

How else can you help?

Talk about health and safety every day. Talk about our joint health and safety committee, what it does and how young workers can get involved. Talk about news stories or personal experiences related to safety. Use everyday workplace situations as opportunities to discuss hazards and risks.

Remember, we were all young workers at one time. Remember how overwhelming it may have seemed. In such situations, health and safety may be compromised. Talking about safety helps keep us all safe. It makes safety part of who we are and what we do.

Thanks for participating today. Do you have any questions?

* Institute for Work and Health (Ontario)

References:

WorkSafeNB

YouthSafeNB

What's a Safety Talk? Guidelines for Use

Information for New Workers

Let's Talk Safety: Toolkit for Employers of Young Workers

WorkSafeNB Guide to OHS Legislation, New Employee Orientation

Attendance Sheet

Department and Division		
Meeting location		Name/Title of employee conducting meeting
Date (yyyy-mm-dd)	Time	Shift
Number in team/department		Number attending

Other safety issues or suggestions made by employees

Record of those attending

Name (please print)	Signature
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
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Follow-up actions/remarks

Signature	Date
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