

7 Safety Tips for Protecting New & Young Workers



Do you remember your first job? Hoping to make a good impression on your supervisor, you probably avoided going to him every five minutes with questions.

If you were lucky, one of your more experienced co-workers caught you doing something dangerous, stopped you and showed you the safe way to do it. If you were less fortunate, you suffered an injury or caused property, equipment or product damage as a result of not knowing what you were doing.

At this time of year, many workplaces see an influx of new and young workers. Much like you, they also want to make a good impression. And just as you didn't want to look like an idiot by asking too many questions, they may be equally reluctant to ask questions.

You can't let new and young workers stumble through procedures in an effort to avoid asking a 'dumb' question—especially if staying quiet puts them at risk.

So here are seven tips to help you combat this reluctance and keep your new and young workers safe on the job:

1. When new workers are undergoing orientation in your workplace, tell them that if they're ever confused about any procedures, they must go to a supervisor rather than attempt to figure out the problem on their own. Supervisors should never criticize or belittle them for questions.
2. Tell them how to report unsafe or unhealthy conditions and reinforce your expectation that they'll do so without delay.
3. Ensure they're properly trained on safe work procedures, PPE they need to use and the hazards that they could face on the job. And don't simply take a new or young worker's word that he's clear on the procedure. Have that person explain and demonstrate the tasks he'll be required to perform.
4. Don't overload them with information. Provide training in manageable chunks so they can absorb and retain the information.
5. Ensure that new and young workers are closely supervised. Also, ask other experienced workers to watch out for them and intervene if they see a new or young worker performing a task unsafely or incorrectly. (ID new workers so that co-workers will know who they are.)
6. Give them written information on the tasks they'll be performing, the

potential hazards and the steps they need to take, including wearing PPE, to keep themselves safe. They can use these documents for reference when needed.

7. Be a good role model' and ensure supervisors do the same. If you aren't wearing required PPE or are taking unsafe shortcuts, what sort of example are you setting'

New & Young Worker Resources

The OHS Insider's New & Young Worker Compliance Centre has resources that can help you better protect these vulnerable workers, including:

- A young worker orientation checklist you can download and use to create a young worker safety training program
- An infographic on new and young workers you can display in your workplace
- An article explaining the legal protections for young workers and how to comply with them
- Recorded webinars on young worker safety training and how to effectively provide safety training to 'generation Y' workers
- An example of how one workplace improved its young worker training program
- Safety posters geared toward new and young workers.

And go to Safety Smart for a safety talk handout on 10 questions young and new workers need answered. Not a subscriber to SafetySmart? Sign up for a free trial.