

Glenn Commandments: How to Implement an Effective Mentoring Program at Your Workplace



While all work fatalities are painful, it's especially poignant when the victim is under the age of 24. Regrettably, being young and inexperienced puts these workers at a higher risk of fatal and serious injuries. Thus, of the 1,057 Canadians who got killed at work in 2023, 29 were aged 15 to 24, according to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada. The casualty rate was even higher in 2022, when this same age group accounted for 33 of the 993 workplace fatalities recorded in Canada.

One reason young workers are killed at disproportionate rates is their reluctance to talk to supervisors about their own safety. That's why OHS coordinators need to ensure that their supervisors understand that young workers are different from other workers and shouldn't be left to their own devices just because they don't ask questions or request help.

How to Implement a Mentoring Program

[Implementing a mentoring program at your workplace](#) is an effective way to protect not only young workers but those of any age who are new to the job. Mentoring involves pairing an experienced or skilled worker with a worker who's young or

inexperienced. The mentor's mission is to support the inexperienced worker by offering advice, answering questions, and serving as a role model. While mentoring programs come in a variety of shapes and sizes, there are 5 basic steps you must take to set one up at your own workplace.

Step 1. Establish a Written Mentoring Policy

The starting point is to create a [written mentoring policy or program](#) that includes [procedures](#) for mentoring. The policy may stand alone or be incorporated into your broader OHS program. In either case, it should specifically address:

- The purpose of the mentoring program.
- The method of and criteria for selecting workers to serve as mentors.
- The mentor's roles and responsibilities.
- The training mentors will receive to carry out those roles and responsibilities.

Step 2. Recruit Mentors

Mentoring works best when mentors serve voluntarily. So, it may take some persuasion to get workers to take on the role. One option is to offer bonuses or other monetary benefits. A less expensive recruitment technique is to stress the benefits workers get from serving as mentors, including the opportunity to develop leadership skills and experience that enhance not only their value to the company but job satisfaction and overall work experience. You also need to keep in mind that workers who come forward to volunteer may not be qualified or well suited to serve as mentors. That's why you need to establish eligibility criteria, such as length of service, lack of a disciplinary record, positive performance reviews, as well as intangible [personal qualities](#) such as patience,

reliability, and strong communication skills.

Step 3. Provide Mentoring Training

Having the right qualifications isn't enough. To be great mentors, workers need mentorship training covering, at a minimum:

- The purpose and objectives of mentorship.
- The mentoring program's policies and procedures.
- The mentor's roles and responsibilities and how to carry them out effectively.
- Any reporting requirements associated with mentoring.

Step 4. Assign Mentors to Mentees

One of the keys to mentoring success is pairing mentors and mentees who are compatible. In addition to selecting a mentor who performs or has performed the mentee's particular job, consider personality types and teaching styles. For example, it may be inadvisable to assign a worker who's very shy to a mentor who's loud and highly assertive. Since chemistry is impossible to predict, provide for methods of reassigning pairings in case things between the mentor and mentee don't work out.

Step 5. Monitor the Effectiveness of Your Mentoring Program

As with any safety program, you need to monitor your mentoring program to determine how well it's working. **Best Practice:** Ask mentors and mentees to complete an [evaluation form](#) for the program at the end of the mentorship (which typically last from 30 to 90 days) asking about the benefits each got from the arrangement and how the program could be improved. Use the feedback to assess the program's effectiveness and identify

problems that you need to correct or improvements that you can make.