

Young Worker Safety Tips from England



The British Safety Council recently launched Speak Up, Stay Safe, a campaign to teach teens about workplace safety. The campaign site includes a free online game (The Missing: A Dangerous Truth) and app to help young workers stay safe on the job.

The new campaign also has some tips for employers. For example, the Council notes that there are some ways that are more effective in getting your safety message across to younger workers. It recommends considering the following:

Messaging. Health and safety messages should be framed in the right way. Young people need to understand what's expected of them but the messages should be kept short, simple and easy to remember. Make it personal so that they understand the benefits for them and not just the company.

Delivery. Young people who are less used to work may have a shorter attention span, so communications should be punchy and brief. Be as clear and precise as possible with instructions. Visual messages may be more effective. Don't rely on one form of communication—instead reinforce messages with other forms of communication. For example, photographs of correct and incorrect procedures can aid understanding. Or demonstrate how to perform a task safely, instead of telling them.

Understanding. Don't overload messages with technical jargon that young workers, who are new to the job, might struggle to understand. Regularly check that they understand what they're being asked to do (even if they say yes). Some young workers may have difficulty reading or writing. They may need to be shown how to perform the same task several times. Also, be aware of cultural and language barriers. Those who don't speak English as their first language may require additional instruction, so double check their understanding.

Create opportunities for communication. Methods such as discussion groups, online forums, toolbox talks, mentoring programs, suggestion schemes and other tools can be useful for raising awareness.

Provide feedback. Give positive and constructive feedback, praise and encouragement. Ensure that you're always approachable and receptive.

Style. Young people communicate with each other in different ways and are likely to be more open and responsive to certain types of communication. For instance, social networking, electronic and mobile communications such as email and text are more prevalent among younger people. Where appropriate, these platforms may

be effective means of communicating safety messages.

OHS Resources

The OHS Insider has resources that can help you better protect your young workers, including:

- 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
- A young worker orientation checklist you can download and use to create a young worker safety training program
- An example of how one workplace improved its young worker training program
- An infographic on new and young workers you can display in your workplace.

You can also go to Safety Smart for:

- A safety talk handout on 10 questions young and new workers need answered
- A follow-up quiz.

Not a subscriber to SafetySmart? Sign up for a free trial.