

Tips for training young workers

Young workers need—and have a right to—quality safety and health training. However, because of developmental and generational differences, as well as limited life experiences, your traditional training plan might not be as effective. Incorporate the following tips to keep young workers safe:

Tour the facility and discuss all hazards

—even if they seem obvious to you. Discuss areas and equipment that are off limits. Go over emergency procedures, including the location of fire extinguishers and first aid kits.



Assign a mentor

Minimize distraction. Provide training in a familiar environment. Keep trainings short and focused.

Give ongoing feedback. Acknowledge safe practices, such as wearing safety goggles or using proper lifting techniques. Coach safe behavior by asking why they are doing it that way. Discuss solutions and make an agreement going forward.

Discuss the importance of asking questions, getting clarification, and reporting hazards. Young workers may find it challenging to speak up when they're unsure or uneasy about a task. Reinforce desired behaviors by thanking them when they come to you with questions and ideas.

Build in time for discussion. Respect is very important for young workers. Discuss their right to a safe and healthy workplace. Ask them to share ideas for improvement. Explain the reasons behind the rules and how they will be held accountable for following them.

Assign a mentor, preferably someone who is respected and experienced. Provide time for them to get to know each other so the young worker is comfortable asking questions.

Young workers (16-25) are **twice as likely** to be injured on the job. Many of these injuries can be attributed to **lack of training**.

—National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



Ongoing feedback



Discussion time



Minimize distraction

Hands-on training is the best strategy for learning a new task or piece of equipment. Use this pattern to maximize retention and verify understanding:

- 1 I do:** Demonstrate each step in the process. Include personal protection equipment; point out safety features.
- 2 We do:** Perform the task together; articulate each step in the process.
- 3 You do:** The worker does the task. Provide feedback as needed.
- 4 You teach:** The worker teaches back how to do the task.

Young workers can be eager to please and hesitant to admit they don't know how to do something. Avoid asking yes or no questions.

Not this....

Do you understand?

You've used this type of equipment before, right?

Have you done this task before?

But this....

How could you get hurt doing this?

What are the steps to using this piece of equipment?

How do you protect yourself from getting hurt while doing this task?

Workers are up to **four times more likely** to be injured in their **first four weeks** on a new job.

Population and Workforce Studies Group, Institute for Work & Health