

# Resilience in young workers



## Important information

- Laws protecting minor workers, including restricted hours and prohibited occupations ([bit.ly/3mX6fXs](https://bit.ly/3mX6fXs))
- Oyes Young employee safety awareness online training ([bit.ly/3wauoxy](https://bit.ly/3wauoxy))

## Who is a young worker?

A young worker is anyone under the age of 25 who is participating in the workforce. This includes individuals entirely new to work, or those facing new hazards.

## How is young worker resilience different?

Young workers are exposed to unique challenges and are twice as likely to get hurt than their older counterparts. Reasons why they are more likely to get injured include inexperience, lack of training, willingness to take risks, hesitancy to ask questions, and inadequate orientation and supervision. Young males are more at risk for injury than the overall working population. It is important to take all this into account when you are

orienting a young worker to your team. Assisting them in building resilience when it comes to their work and helping them identify hazards that could put them at risk is a great first step.

## Psychosocial risks

Psychosocial risks are work-related stressors that can negatively affect an individual's resilience, as well as an organization's effectiveness. Examples of these risks could include lack of role clarity, indirect communication, and job insecurity.

Young workers are especially vulnerable to psychosocial risks because some of these are rooted in a lack of work experience. Helping a young worker develop their resilience can affect how they tackle issues related to these

risks, and you can do this by establishing psychological safety. Include your young workers in discussions around company decisions and support them speaking up to make changes without judgment or criticism. Encourage this kind of input regularly so they build the confidence and knowledge to make an impact.

## Hazards

Sometimes the hazards that workers are exposed to are more obvious, like ladder use or heavy machinery. Other times, they aren't so obvious, like chemical exposure, noise, or airborne particles. These hazards are often hidden and can cause health complications immediately or years down the road.

The presence of physical hazards can affect the resilience of all workers by adding stress that can build over time, making it more difficult to recover. Knowledge and information about how to spot these hazards can be lifesaving. Learn how to identify hazards using SAIF's hazard and communication page ([saif.com/hazardID](https://saif.com/hazardID)).

While physical hazards are important to know, it's essential to help young workers develop their resilience in the face of hazards that are unseen, such as those presented by a lack of psychological safety.

## Suggestions to help young workers build resilience

- **Make trainings age appropriate.** By encouraging questions and keeping instructions clear and concise you create a safe space for young workers to voice their concerns.
- **Supervision is important.** Heavy objects, knives, hot surfaces, and hazardous machinery are all examples of risk factors within the workplace that young workers are exposed to. Ensure that they receive training to recognize these hazards and know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- **Retrain employees** after near misses or accidents/incidents.
- **Check all equipment.** Some of it can't be used by workers under the age of 18. Label the machinery/tools if necessary.
- **Establish a safe connection with young workers.** It will allow for an open line of communication that's built on honesty and trust.
- **Involve young workers** in developing safety solutions

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## Take action

### 1. Young worker safety and health check-in

This activity is useful in a one-on-one conversation with your young workers to discuss their comfort level with their work and gauge what kind of training they have already received. This can also help you discuss the things they need to know to continue working safely.

- Normal workday overview
- Clarify if there will be work with chemicals. Train on how to use, handle, store, and dispose of them
- What kind of training and instructions to expect
- What kind of protective equipment will be used? How to determine the condition it's in and how to use it
- Clarify who the supervisor(s) are and where to find them
- How to report safety concerns to your supervisor
- How to operate the equipment safely

### 2. Get to know each other through team building bingo

Materials needed: bingo cards for the whole group, markers, or pens

Time: 30 minutes

If you have a larger group of young workers, have everyone, including the supervisor, contribute a fun fact to a bingo card and print copies. Each square should include a fact about their life, for example: "I love pie." Have everyone mingle and find the person to match the square. The first person to fill a row wins (you can also do blackout bingo). After the activity is done everyone can share which fun fact was theirs. This activity will help everyone get acquainted and learn at least one fact about their boss.