

Safety for New and Young Workers

Briana Diopenes – Graduate Environmental Specialist

New and young workers that are less experienced in a particular workplace are more prone to workplace injury (Work Health and Safety Training 2016). Between 2003 and 2016, 335 young workers aged under 25 have died as a result of a workplace incident (Safe Work Australia 2018). It is the responsibility of the employer, supervisor or manager to provide new and young workers with the right induction processes and training to avoid any potential hazards and prepare them with the correct emergency procedures if exposed to a risk (Work Health and Safety Training 2016). While it is the employee’s responsibility to take care of their own safety, and the safety of those around them, by following all reasonable workplace health and safety procedures. This insight is written as an extension of the previous [New and Young Workers Safety](#) insight issued on the 31 January.

Common Workplace Hazards

There are workplace hazards in all types of work environments, from the office to a large construction site. The most common workplace hazard that occurs across all work environments are safety hazards such as slip-and-falls. However, different work environments have different potential risks and it is important to understand the common hazards specific to your particular work conditions (Andress 2017).

Physical workplace hazards include;

- slips, trips and falls
- frequent lifting & heavy loads
- faulty machinery
- exposure to chemicals
- poor posture
- awkward and repetitive movements
- frequent use of force (push, pull, reach)



A healthy workplace environment is just as important as a physically safe one (Safe Work Australia 2019). A low standard of organisation within the workplace may present some health hazards. General housekeeping or psychological issues that may go unnoticed in the short term can have a significant long-term impact (Andress 2017).

Organisational workplace hazards;

- intense workload
- fatigue
- workplace bullying
- sexual harassment
- cleanliness of overall working conditions



Mental stress claims statistics of 2017/18 provided by Safe Work Australia (Safe Work Australia 2019).



Working Safely



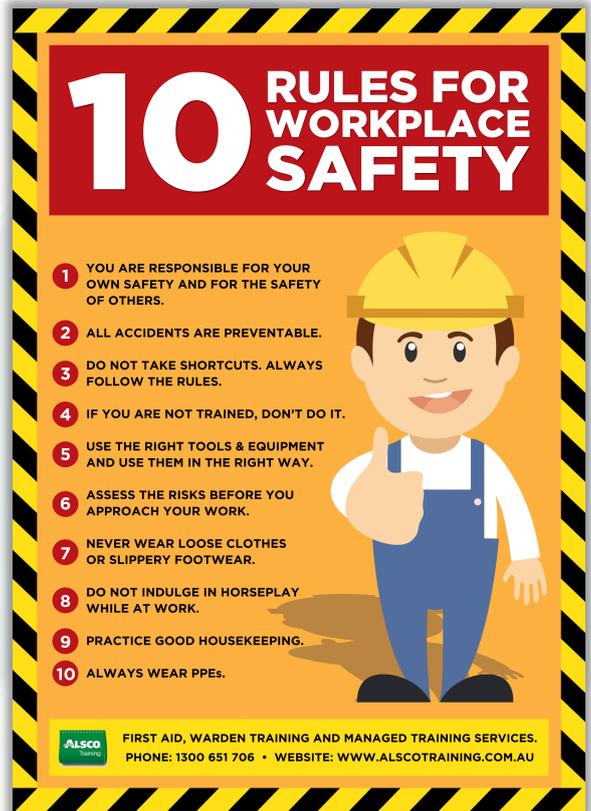
To ensure workplace health and safety it is important for new and young employees to ask for help if they are unsure of how to perform a task safely (Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety 2017).



Employers responsibility to Ensure Safety

To ensure the health and safety of new and young workers, an employer should provide a comprehensive induction program at the beginning of their employment. The induction should expose employees to the health and safety policies and procedures of the company, provide information regarding hazard and incident reporting, and discuss the workplace fire and emergency response (Work Health and Safety Training 2016).

Training should also be provided to employees demonstrating how to carry out a task in the correct way, to ensure safety to the individual and surrounding workers. An employer should critically consider the task they assign to new and young workers; some tasks may require particular skills, abilities and experiences in order to be performed safely. On the job training instructed by the employer should demonstrate how to perform the job safely, how to identify hazards, how to work safely with the necessary equipment, and when to use personal protective equipment (PPE). New and young employees should also be familiar with their immediate supervisor, safety and health representative and other co-workers (Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety 2017). Supervisors should always be available to provide safety advice and ensure new and young workers comfortable feel to ask questions or raise concerns about safety hazards (Work Health and Safety Training 2016).



There are many online tools available to help employer's manage workplace safety for new and young workers:

- DMIRS [Safety tips for new and young workers and their employers](#) (WA)
- Fairwork Ombudsman [An employer's guide to employing young workers](#)
- Comcare Australia [Safety Tips for New and Young Workers and Their Employers](#)

How New and Young Workers can Ensure Safety

It is the individual's responsibility to comply with the health and safety requirements of their job to reduce the risk of workplace injuries amongst the workplace. This includes undergoing any essential training, following the instructions set out for a job and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) when required (Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety 2017).

To ensure workplace health and safety it is important for new and young employees to ask for help if they are unsure of how to perform a task safely (Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety 2017). Some example questions to ask a supervisor for help include;

- 'I'm not sure how this works, could you spare a few minutes to show me again?'
- 'I think I've got the hang of this, but can you watch to make sure I'm doing everything right?'
- 'I'm still a bit uncomfortable with this, would you mind explaining it/or showing it to me again?'

New and young workers should feel comfortable reporting their concerns for the health and safety of themselves or their co-workers. Unsafe situations that may cause harm or any injuries themselves must be reported to either



a supervisor, employer and/or safety and health representative (Work Health and Safety Training 2016). People working through a group training organisation, a labour hire agency, work experience or structured workplace learning student have the same health and safety rights as an employee and should feel comfortable to report their concerns (Department of Mines Industry Regulation and Safety 2017).

There are numerous tools available online to help New and Young Workers navigate workplace safety:

- DMIRS [Safety tips for new and young workers and their employers](#) (WA)
- Fairwork Ombudsman [A guide for young workers](#)
- Worksafe [Smart Move](#) (WA)
- Comcare Australia [Safety Tips for New and Young Workers and Their Employers](#)



Seeking more information

For more information on health and safety around the workplace speaking with a supervisor, a person in management or even a more experienced co-worker may be helpful (Work Health and Safety Training 2016). Health and safety representatives are there to provide assistance and represent workers on health and safety issues. Visit <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/> to find resources and the relevant work health and safety authority in your state or territory.

If you or your business have any concerns about new and young worker safety or would like to improve health and safety systems within your workplace you can contact Integrate Sustainability on 08 9468 0338 or email enquiries@integratesustainability.com.au.

Integrate Sustainability

Primary Business Address
Lower Ground Floor
3 Richardson St
West Perth, 6005
Western Australia

Phone: (+618) 9468 0338
E-mail: enquiries@integratesustainability.com.au



■ environment ■ safety ■ community

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