



**Hard to believe, isn't it? Your son or daughter is getting ready to start their first job. Although you know this is an important milestone, you may feel nervous about sending your child off to work. Whether it's a part-time job or the start of a new career, all workers face dangers in the workplace, with young workers especially vulnerable to workplace-related injuries. In New Brunswick, more than 1,500 young workers (between the ages of 15 and 24) suffer workplace injuries each year.**

**But you're not powerless in this situation. Parents can play a vital role in ensuring their child's safety at work. Read on for information on why youth are at an increased risk for workplace injuries, and what you can do to ensure your child's safety at work.**

# PARENTS:

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR YOUNG WORKER

### Why are youth more at risk for workplace injuries?

According to research on adolescent development and risk of injury, young people:

- Undergo a variety of physiological changes as they develop into adults. Maturation changes in the brain, circulating pubertal hormones and changes in the stress response system may be responsible for adolescents' exploratory natures, and may be the cause for their increased risk of injury.
- Do perceive risk in dangerous situations; however, the potential consequences of risky behaviours may be disregarded when a short-term benefit (such as gaining social acceptance by "showing off") is perceived. This means that while they may be able to recognize that a certain behaviour is dangerous, their desire to be socially accepted may cause them to ignore the potential consequences.
- Have impaired decision-making capabilities when in stressful situations (such as starting a new job). This could lead them to take risks they might not otherwise take.
- Need a strong support system – one that includes policymakers, employers, teachers, and especially parents. Being a part of this support system involves reinforcing health and safety concepts through discussion with your child.

### What are youth saying?

Even if they feel unsafe at work, many young workers will not speak up. Atlantic Canadian youth who responded "no" to a survey question asking if they would be likely to talk to someone if they had concerns about their safety at work cited the following reasons for their reluctance to speak up:

**"Because sometimes it's do it or lose your job."**

**"I know no real harm will come to me at work."**

**"I would be nervous and feel stupid."**

**"I don't want my employer to think I'm incompetent."**



**Now that you know why youth may be more vulnerable to workplace injuries, what can you do to help protect your child?**

**Here are some suggestions:**

**Remind them that they have rights as young workers; specifically:**

- The right to know about workplace hazards, and to receive a health and safety orientation and job-specific training.
- The right to participate in solving health and safety problems at their workplace.
- The right to refuse dangerous work.

**Make discussions about workplace safety commonplace in your home.**

**Ask your child questions about:**

- The types of tasks they do at work.
- How much supervision is provided.
- How much training they've received, and whether this training is ongoing.
- How they feel while they are at work.
- Whether they have confidence in their abilities at work.

**Ensure your child has the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) required for their job, and that it remains in good condition. Most importantly, ensure your child is wearing their PPE each time they leave to go to work.**

**Share this tip sheet with them and let them know that you are committed to helping ensure their safety at work.**

**Sit down at a computer together and take a look at some online health and safety-related resources. A couple of great sites to get you started are [www.youthsafenb.ca](http://www.youthsafenb.ca) and [www.worksafenb.ca](http://www.worksafenb.ca).**

**Let them know that WorkSafeNB is here to discuss their safety concerns and questions. Have them call 1 800 222-9775 and ask to speak to our youth programs co-ordinator.**

**get an orientation and training.  
know your rights.  
ask questions.  
wear the gear.  
refuse unsafe work.**

**YOUTHSAFENB.CA**

