



Talking Safety



Teaching Young Workers About Job Safety and Health
Iowa Edition

2007



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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Labor Occupational Health Program
University of California, Berkeley

Education Development Center, Inc.

Preface

NIOSH is pleased to present *Youth @ Work–Talking Safety*, a foundation curriculum in occupational safety and health. This curriculum is the culmination of many years’ work by a consortium of partners dedicated to reducing occupational injuries and illnesses among youth. The initial curricula upon which *Youth @ Work–Talking Safety* is based included *WorkSafe!*, developed by the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) at the University of California, Berkeley, and *Safe Work/Safe Workers*, developed by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) in Newton, Massachusetts. Those products were produced under grants from NIOSH as well as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor; the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents; the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration; and Liberty Mutual Insurance Company.

The activities in the *Youth @ Work* curriculum were developed in consultation with numerous teachers and staff from general high schools, school to work, work experience, and vocational education programs, as well as the California WorkAbility program, which serves students with cognitive and learning disabilities. The activities have been extensively pilot tested and used by numerous high school teachers, job trainers, and work coordinators around the country to teach youth important basic occupational safety and health skills. In 2004, NIOSH made a commitment to integrate an OSH curriculum into U.S. high schools. As part of this effort, the States’ Career Clusters Initiative which operates under the auspices of the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education consortium (NASDCTEe) joined the partnership. The *Youth @ Work* curriculum was evaluated in sixteen schools across ten states during the 2004-2005 school year. This final version reflects the input from all of the teachers, administrators, and partners who participated in that evaluation.

Authors

Youth @ Work was based on materials originally authored by Diane Bush, Robin Dewey, and Betty Szudy of LOHP and Christine Miara of EDC. Additional contributors to *Youth @ Work* include Dr. Carol Stephenson, Dr. Andrea Okun, and Dr. Ted Fowler of NIOSH, and Dr. Frances Beauman from IOES at Southern Illinois University.

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This curriculum was developed under the leadership of Dr. Paul Schulte, Director of the Education and Information Division at NIOSH. Editors of this curriculum were Gene Darling (LOHP) and John Diether (NIOSH). Graphic designer and layout editor was Kate Oliver (LOHP), and illustrations were provided by Mary Ann Zapalac (through LOHP) and Pat Haskins (NIOSH). Technical reviewers included Dr. Letitia Davis (Massachusetts Department of Public Health), Mary Miller (Washington Department of Labor and Industries), Elise Handelman (OSHA), and representatives of various professional and educational organizations such as the American Industrial Hygiene Association, the American Society of Safety Engineers, and the National Safety Council.

We would like to thank the many teachers and administrators from the participating schools and states who evaluated the pilot curriculum.

The curriculum includes a ten-minute videotape, *Teens: The Hazards We Face in the Workplace*, which was produced and directed by Andrew Jones and Donald Reed of Black Earth Communications, Boston, Massachusetts. Nine high school students from the Boston area participated in creating the videotape.

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For More Information

Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP)
University of California, Berkeley
2223 Fulton St., 4th Floor
Berkeley, CA 94720-5120
(510) 642-5507
www.youngworkers.org

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)
55 Chapel St.
Newton, MA 02458
(617) 618-2238
www.edc.org

National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health (NIOSH)
4676 Columbia Parkway, C-10
Cincinnati, OH 45226
(513) 533-8581
www.cdc.gov/niosh

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Table of Contents

Introduction ix

Lessons

1. Young Worker Injuries 1

2. Finding Hazards 11

3. Finding Ways To Make the Job Safer 21

4. Emergencies at Work 45

5. Know Your Rights 57

6. Taking Action 67

Overheads

Student Handouts

Appendix

- A. Optional Student Handout: Hazards in Typical Teen Jobs
- B. Resources for More Information
- C. Certificate of Completion

Introduction

Why Teach Young Workers About Job Safety and Health?

Millions of teens in the United States work. Surveys indicate that 80% of teens have worked by the time they finish high school. While work provides numerous benefits for young people, it can also be dangerous. Every year, approximately 84,000 youth are injured on the job seriously enough to seek emergency room treatment. In fact, teens are injured at a higher rate than adult workers.

As new workers, adolescents are likely to be inexperienced and unfamiliar with many of the tasks required of them. Yet despite teen workers' high job injury rates, safety at work is usually one of the last things they worry about. Many of teens' most positive traits—energy, enthusiasm, and a need for increased challenge and responsibility—can result in their taking on tasks they are not prepared to do safely. They may also be reluctant to ask questions or make demands on their employers.

Health and safety education is an important component of injury prevention for working teens. While workplace-specific training is most critical, young people also need the opportunity to learn and practice general health and safety skills that they will carry with them from job to job. Teens should be able to recognize hazards in any workplace. They should understand how hazards can be controlled, what to do in an emergency, what rights they have on the job, and how to speak up effectively when problems arise at work.

School and community-based programs that place youth in jobs offer an important venue for teaching these skills. One national program that recognizes the importance of including these skills as part of the educational experience is the Career Cluster Initiative, developed by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and currently being implemented in a number of states. OVAE identified 16 career clusters that include the major job opportunities in today's workforce. Examples of clusters are finance, architecture and construction, and health science. (For a complete list of career clusters, see www.careerclusters.org.) Each cluster has a curriculum framework and a set of core knowledge and skills students should master, which includes workplace health and safety.

Youth @ Work: Talking Safety

This curriculum has been designed to teach core health and safety skills and knowledge, covering basic information relevant to any occupation.

The learning activities in this curriculum are intended to raise awareness among young people about occupational safety and health and provide them with the basic skills they need to become active participants in creating safe and healthy work environments.

The activities highlight hazards and prevention strategies from a wide variety of workplaces. The materials are very flexible. They may be used as a stand-alone curriculum or may be incorporated into other safety programs. Teachers who have used this curriculum indicated that the material was an excellent introduction to other safety instruction such as the OSHA 10-hour course or occupational specific safety instruction. They also said it could be used to enhance other safety programs. Educators can tailor the curriculum to students in a specific career cluster by selecting the workplace examples and scenarios provided which are most relevant to that career cluster.

This curriculum has been endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education's Career Cluster Initiative, Job Corps, and Skills USA.

Overview of the Curriculum

Youth @ Work: Talking Safety is designed to help teachers, as well as school and community-based job placement staff, give young people the basics of job health and safety in a fun and interesting way. The curriculum presents essential information and skills through a focus on six topic areas:

Lesson 1, *Young Worker Work Injuries*, assesses students' current knowledge of job safety and legal rights. It also introduces students to these issues and emphasizes the impact a job injury can have on a young person's life.

Lesson 2, *Finding Hazards*, develops an understanding of the common health and safety hazards that teens may face on the job.

Lesson 3, *Finding Ways To Make the Job Safer*, explains measures that can reduce or eliminate hazards on the job. It also shows students how to get more information about specific hazards they may face and on how to control them.

Lesson 4, *Emergencies at Work*, introduces students to the various types of emergencies that may occur in a workplace, and how the employer and workers should respond to them.

Lesson 5, *Know Your Rights*, focuses on the legal rights all workers have under health and safety laws, the special rights young workers have under child labor laws, and the government agencies and other resources that can help. Be sure to obtain the version of this curriculum that is specific to your state because some laws and agency names vary from state to state. Download from: www.cdc.gov/NIOSH.

Lesson 6, *Taking Action*, helps develop skills in speaking up effectively if a problem arises at work.

Lesson Plans, Overheads, and Student Handouts are provided for all six lessons. The 10-minute videotape presented in Lesson 1 is also included. The Appendix includes an optional handout which gives more information about hazards in typical teen jobs, a list of resources, and a Certificate of Completion which may be photocopied.

Lessons may be presented together or over several class periods. Included in each lesson are:

- Learning Objectives (what the students will learn).
- A Lesson Plan chart with a short summary of the activities included, the time required for each activity, and the materials needed.
- A section titled Preparing To Teach This Lesson, with a list of steps to follow when you prepare—obtain equipment, prepare handouts, etc.
- Detailed Instructor’s Notes with complete teaching instructions.
- Tips for a Shorter Lesson (suggestions for covering the material in less time).

Each lesson begins with an introductory discussion, followed by two or three participatory learning activities for teaching the concepts of that lesson. At least one of the learning activities in each lesson is very basic, with minimal or no reading required, and is designed to meet the needs of all students. Several of these activities have been developed for, and pilot tested with, students who have cognitive and learning disabilities.

As you prepare to teach this course, look through all the activities that make up each lesson. Select the activities that you feel will be most effective with your particular students. The curriculum is very flexible and gives you many alternatives from which to choose.

The time required for each activity within a lesson is shown in the Lesson Plan chart at the beginning of the lesson. This entire course can be taught in three to five hours, depending upon whether you teach one activity, or all activities, from each lesson. If you have less than three hours to devote to this topic, consult the section at the end of each lesson called “Tips for a Shorter Lesson.”

