

Connecticut Young Worker Safety Facts

Work is an important and beneficial experience for many teens. When part of a structured work-based learning experience, connected to the school, it adds relevancy to students' classroom learning and helps in future decision-making regarding further education and careers.

It is estimated that 80% of teens are employed at some point during their high school years. However work without safety awareness can also be hazardous, especially for teens. ***The Connecticut Young Worker Safety Team addresses youth safety!***

National Data

- Every year approximately 70 teens die from work injuries in the United States.
- At least 70,000 teens are injured seriously enough each year to receive treatment in Hospital Emergency Departments.
- The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health estimates that 200,000 teens under the age of 18 years are injured on the job each year.
- Teen workers are injured at higher rates than adult workers despite the fact that they typically work less hours than adults and are prohibited from high-risk occupations.

Connecticut Data

- Between 1997 and 2001 there were 1,418 workers compensation reports of injury to young workers ages 14-17 years in Connecticut. There are undoubtedly many more injuries that are not reported.
- The number of injuries increased by age group, with 95% of the reported injuries among 16-17 year olds. 60% of the injuries happened to males.

The most frequently reported injuries for CT teen workers are:

- Lacerations – 22%
- Sprains or Strains – 22%
- Contusions – 17%
- Burns – 9%

(Include pie chart with distribution of injuries)

Injuries were most frequently reported for:

- Eating and Drinking places – 24%
- General Merchandise stores – 13%
- Food Stores – 12%
- Health Services – 7%
- General Government – 6%

(Include pie chart with distribution of injuries by industry type)

Occupations with the most reported injuries are:

- Laborer – 26%
- Restaurant Employee - 19%
- Retail store employee – 10%
- Convalescent or Nursing home employee – 2%

(Include pie chart with distribution of injuries by occupation)

Connecticut Young Worker Safety Team

The Connecticut Young Worker Safety Team is a collaboration of state, federal, local and regional agencies. Members include the US Department of Labor, the CT Departments of Education, Labor and Public Health, the Capitol Region Workforce Development Board, the Capitol Region Educational Council and the Middletown Health Department. **The goal of this collaborative effort is to improve the health and safety of teens in the workplace through awareness, education, training and advocacy.**

Current Activities and Resources:

- **Work Safe!** - an interactive young worker safety curriculum, designed to introduce teens to job safety issues, available in a "train-the-trainer" format;
- statistical and informational presentations on youth safety in Connecticut;
- information on Connecticut and federal child labor laws;
- technical assistance on young worker safety issues; and
- related educational materials.

Contacts:

Connecticut State Department of Labor

- OSHA – 860-509-4550 (state/municipal worksites and worksites)
- Wage and Workplace Standards Division – 860-263-6791
(CT child labor laws)

US Department of Labor

- OSHA (private employers): 860-240-3152 (Hartford Office)
203-579-5581 (Bridgeport Office)
- OSHA Referral Line 1-800-321-OSHA
- Wage and Hour Division (Federal child labor laws): 860-240-4160

Connecticut State Department of Education

- School-to-Career (STC): Judith Andrews, STC Manager and Work-based Learning/Career Development Consultant: 860-713-6766

Connecticut State Department of Public Health

- Occupational Health Program – 860-509-7744
- Injury Prevention Program - 860-509-7791

Additional Electronic Resources:

- CT DOL: (www.ctdol.state.ct.us)
- CT SDE: (www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Career/WB/index.htm); and
(www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Career/STC/index.htm)
- Teen Workers Website: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html>
- Youth Rules Website: <http://www.youthrules.dol.gov/>

WORK SAFE! A Safety Curriculum for Young Workers

The majority of adolescents will be employed in the workforce at some point before they leave high school. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimates that over 200,000 teens are injured on the job each year. Most teen workers receive little or no training on occupational health and safety issues. Teens, parents, and employers are frequently unaware of the risks young workers face and the provisions of state/federal labor laws that are designed to protect young workers.

The *Work Safe!* Curriculum is designed to introduce teens to job safety issues through interactive, fun activities. The curriculum teaches youth how to identify common job-related safety hazards and control measures and gives them the opportunity to develop and practice problem-solving strategies. Teens are provided with resource materials, information on the Connecticut/Federal labor laws and where to go for help. Although the labor law information applies specifically to teens, the other safe work information presented in the curriculum is appropriate for first time or new workers of all ages.

The curriculum consists of four lessons and takes about 2.5 hours to deliver to teens but can be shortened or lengthened depending on the presenter's needs. Four alternative activities are also included that are designed to meet the needs of students with cognitive disabilities. However these activities may also be appropriate and fun for any students. The alternative lessons present material in a more concrete manner with minimal or no reading required.

Curriculum Outline:

Lesson One – Teen Work Injuries

- Introduction – Teens and Safety.
- Small group quiz.
- Report back and discussion.
- Discuss story – one teen's on the job experience.
- Explain goals of this training.

Alternative Lesson One (1A) - Teen Work Injuries

- Introduction – Teens and safety.
- Video and discussion.
- Review.

Lesson Two – Hazard Mapping

- Introduction – What is a job hazard.
- Brainstorm job hazards by category.
- Explain hazard mapping.
- Groups draw hazard maps.
- Groups present maps to class.
- Discussion-controlling hazards.
- Review

Alternative Lesson Two (2A) – Finding Hazards

- Introduction and brainstorm.
- Find the hazards in the picture.
- Report back-find the hazards.
- Controlling hazards-Teen stories.
- Hunting for hazards.
- Review.

Lesson Three – Know Your Rights.

- Introduction – Warm-up questions
- Review labor law fact sheets in small groups
- Explain rules of the TV game show.
- Play game.
- Review.

Alternative Lesson Three (3A) – Know Your Rights

- Introduction-Your legal rights.
- Review the fact sheets
- "Labor Law Bingo" Game
- Review.

Lesson Four – Taking Action for Health and Safety

- Introduction
- Volunteers read skits – Elena's Story
- List laws that were violated
- Small groups develop solutions
- Groups role play their solutions
- Discussion – Steps in problem solving
- Wrap-up and evaluation

Alternative Lesson Four (4A) – Taking Action for Health and Safety

- Introduction – Steps in problem solving.
- Conduct role plays
- Review.

The Work Safe! Curriculum was developed by the Labor Occupational Health Program at the University of California, Berkeley under a grant from the US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). It was adapted for Connecticut in collaboration with the Education Development Center, Inc., Newton MA and the Labor Occupational Health Program at the University of California, Berkeley with funding from OSHA.