



Ottawa
Catholic
School Board

Your Child's Workplace Safety **A PARENT'S GUIDE**

Don't assume your children are safe from workplace injuries — even death.
Safety is a full-time job; don't make it a part-time practice.



A sobering fact...

Every year the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) receives approximately 50,000 claims from workers under age 24. And, about 12 young workers are killed annually.



Rob Ellis' heart broke the day his son didn't come home from work.

One February morning in 1999, Rob Ellis' son, David, lost his life on the second day of a temporary bakery job. No other family should have to know the grief the Ellises have endured. Rob now devotes his life to working to do whatever he can to help make Ontario a safer place for everyone — especially for our young workforce.

Young workers under the age of 24 are being hurt and killed on the job every day. They have a greater chance of getting hurt at work than any other age group. The reasons are simple — they have less experience; may not receive proper training and supervision; and, often do not recognize or question dangerous working conditions.

As a parent, you can do a lot to help your child stay safe at work. We suggest the following ideas to open up discussion between you and your child, before they take that big step into the workforce.

Before your child starts a job or begins volunteering:

- Encourage your child to do some safety research. Some good sites are:
 - www.mysafework.com
 - www.wsib.on.ca
 - www.worksmartontario.gov.on.ca
 - www.labour.gov.on.ca
- Ask your son or daughter to research the company they are considering working for. What do people say about the company? Has anyone recently been injured or killed there? Does the company have a health and safety policy and program? Talk with people who are or have worked for the company.
- Ask your child to describe the work they would like to do. This will open up discussion about some of the hazards and dangers in that particular job. For example, *"I'll just be working around the pool watching kids. It's easy work, mom and dad, don't worry!"* This is a great opportunity to talk about wet surfaces and the serious injuries a slip and fall may cause. It also allows you to talk about dangerous chemicals like chlorine and other acids.

- Ask if they will be operating any equipment. What kind of training do they anticipate they will receive?
- Remind your child that safety guards should never be removed when working with machines. If a piece of machinery needs to be cleaned, they should make sure it cannot be turned on accidentally.
- Ask your teen if they think they'll need any personal protective gear. Do they need to obtain safety footwear? Discuss why the protective equipment is needed. How will it protect them? Talk about proper wearing of equipment, much the same way as you did when they were younger and you spoke to them about the benefits of wearing a seatbelt.
- Tell your son or daughter that if they are ever asked to do something that doesn't feel safe, to speak up, and always check with their supervisor. If they still feel unsafe, they have every right to refuse to perform the task.
- Talk about the dangers of working while tired, or while taking medication, drugs or alcohol.



Once your child starts work, ask questions:

- What kind of safety training did you receive? Did it seem like enough?
- Were you provided with personal protective equipment? What kind of condition is it in? Does it fit? Were you instructed on how to wear it properly?
- Do you know your direct supervisor and how to contact him or her? Is there a company health and safety department and telephone number?
- Does your boss believe in and promote health and safety?
- Do you know what to do if you are injured on the job?
- How safe do you feel at work? Are there any situations where it does not feel right?
- Are there company emergency procedures and do you know what to do in an emergency or fire?
- When you are asked to operate a new machine, have you received instruction?

REMEMBER, the law provides rights and responsibilities for safety at work. Under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Canada Labour Code:

- Every worker has the right to:
 - 1) know about any hazards related to their work;
 - 2) participate in making sure their job and workplace are safe and healthy, and;
 - 3) refuse unsafe work.
- Workers must work safely, take personal responsibility, and wear protective equipment properly.
- Employers must provide safety orientation and training, e.g. WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System).
- Employers cannot fire or discipline someone for refusing unsafe work or reporting hazards.
- If an injury happens at work, workers must report all work injuries or illnesses to their supervisor.
- Employers must provide medical aid and report the injury to the WSIB (wsib.on.ca).
- Employers can't tell a worker not to file a claim for a workplace injury.

All injuries, even the perceived "small" injuries must be reported to your child's supervisor. Impress upon your teen the importance of speaking up, to not be shy and to know their rights. Don't let them gamble with their health.

Injuries for young workers may include:

- Sprains and strains from lifting heavy objects;
- Severe burns from working with hot substances (e.g. in fast food outlets);
- Cuts and lacerations from knives and slicing machines;
- Loss of blood and amputations from being crushed or dragged into machinery;
- Broken bones, head injuries and other traumatic injuries from falls.

In partnership with...



Safe At Work Ontario

Passport to Safety

The Ottawa Catholic School Board and its community partners in workplace safety are strong advocates and participants in the WSIB program called *Passport to Safety* (www.passporttosafety.com). Many of our high schools are involved in the teaching of this innovative national youth health and safety test and transcript program. Passport to Safety certification verifies that your child has a basic understanding of what they need to know to protect themselves from injury at work.

For more information on this program, please contact your child's school or the Safe Communities website. This program is, however, not a substitute for specific job training with respect to hazards and responsibilities.

Let's protect the youth of today so they may realize a future tomorrow.

Help is available.

If you or your child have any concerns about work safety that are not being addressed, please call:

Ministry of Labour at 1-800-202-0008



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