

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR YOUNG WORKERS.

A young worker's attitude toward safety is shaped by their early work environment and can last throughout their career. It's your responsibility as an employer to start an open and informative conversation with them about workplace safety. Below are a few topics to cover during your discussion.

### WORKER SAFETY RIGHTS

Explain to your young workers that they have three main rights under Nova Scotia's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act.

- The right to know about hazards and how to safely work with and around them.
- The right to participate in their own safety.
- The right to refuse unsafe work.

**TIP:** *One way to begin this conversation is with a question, such as "Did you know that you can refuse to perform a task if you feel it is unsafe?"*

### WORKPLACE SAFETY HAZARDS AND PRECAUTIONS

In a perfect world, all workplaces would be free from hazards. But the reality is that hazards can be found in any workplace. Talk to your young workers about the differences between safety and health hazards and point out the potential hazards in your environment.

Health hazards endanger a worker's physical health and often take time to show their impact on a worker.

#### Examples of health hazards:

**Chemical:** exposure to any form of chemical, such as compressed gases, solvents, and lead

**Physical:** noise, vibration, heat, cold, and radiation

**Ergonomic:** workplace design, or jobs that involve repetition, force, and posture

**Biological:** organisms or toxic substances produced by living things, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, and insects

Safety hazards can cause bodily injury or property damage and often have an immediate impact on a worker.

#### Examples of safety hazards:

**Machine:** hazards from moving parts, such as rotating shafts, belts, pulleys, blades, and saws

**Energy:** pneumatic or hydraulic pressure, steam, heat, and electricity

**Material handling:** manual and mechanical handling, lifting, lift trucks, conveyors

**Work practices:** working unsafely because of a lack of safe work practices or a failure to follow them

**TIP:** *This is a great opportunity to take your young workers on a tour of the workplace, pointing out the Safety Sticks stickers and the injury prevention measures currently in place.*

### SPEAKING UP ABOUT SAFETY

Your young workers should feel comfortable and confident speaking up about safety. Let them know that even though it may seem awkward to approach their supervisor with a safety concern, staying silent could mean that a hazard is never identified. Tell them that it is both their right and their responsibility to speak up and make it clear that you will always be there to listen.

**TIP:** *Try using a scenario that gives young workers an example of how to speak up about safety. Below is only a suggestion. Feel free to develop an example that is more appropriate to the safety concerns in your workplace.*

*Let's say you're on your way to lunch. As you walk past a piece of equipment, you see that one of its safety guards has been removed. Rather than simply continuing on and hoping that someone else notices, it's your job to speak up. You should always address the immediate hazard first i.e. lock out the machine and put the safety guard back in place (if you are qualified to do so), and then immediately report it to your supervisor.*

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR OTHER WORKERS.

Your other employees may wonder what's going on with all the stickers they see around the workplace. The following covers some points to help you explain the Safety Sticks initiative, the importance of young worker safety, and how the rest of your workers can help out.

### WHAT IS SAFETY STICKS?

On average, just over 3,000 young workers under 25 are injured on the job each year in Nova Scotia. Safety Sticks was created to help reduce those injuries by opening up a dialogue about young worker safety. Explain to your team that the stickers they've seen around their workplace are part of a workplace safety kit that speaks directly to young workers. The overall goal of the kit is to make Nova Scotia's workplaces safer for everyone.

### HOW CAN YOUR OTHER WORKERS HELP?

Getting your entire workforce involved in Safety Sticks will undoubtedly make the program more successful. Talk to your other employees about their role in helping young workers stay safe on the job. Let them know that their positive influence can have a tremendous impact on young workers and potentially shape their outlook on workplace safety for years to come.

Below are just a few of the many ways that they can help.

- Know and practice all workplace safety measures themselves.
- Communicate clearly with young workers.
- Remain consistent in their messages and actions i.e. don't explain a safety protocol and then fail to follow it.
- Listen to and value the input of young workers.
- Treat young workers in a friendly, professional manner.

## KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING.

The resources below can help you further explain the importance of workplace safety to your employees.

### WHAT MATTERS MOST QUIZ

Test your knowledge of workplace safety. Both workers and employees can take the What Matters Most quiz.

[worksafeforlife.ca/worksafetyquiz](https://worksafeforlife.ca/worksafetyquiz)

### WORKPLACE SAFETY VIDEOS

#### For young workers:

Rod Stickman talks to young workers about the importance of workplace safety.

[worksafeforlife.ca/rodstickmanyouth](https://worksafeforlife.ca/rodstickmanyouth)

#### For all workers:

Rod Stickman explains how to create a safer workplace.

[worksafeforlife.ca/rodstickmanbydesign](https://worksafeforlife.ca/rodstickmanbydesign)

### BACK PROTECTION AGENT

Back injuries are the number one workplace injury in Nova Scotia. And they are 100 per cent avoidable. We have videos, prevention tips, and a pledge to help you work toward eliminating back injuries in your workplace.

[worksafeforlife.ca/backprotectionagent](https://worksafeforlife.ca/backprotectionagent)