



New video contest encourages youth to speak up when they have questions about their safety at work.

# New video contest highlights gut instincts for safety at work

By Gail Johnson

When people start a new job, they should receive training and orientation to learn all about a workplace's health and safety policies and practices. Sometimes, they get a manual with all those rules in detail. But there's another tool that helps keep people safe that's less tangible: your gut instinct.

Young workers in particular are often intimidated to speak up when they find themselves in unsafe working

conditions or unsure about how to do a task properly. WorkSafeBC's 2017 student safety video contest encourages youth to trust their instincts and speak up about safety at work.

"Often, young workers know their rights but are afraid to speak up; they just feel they can't, or they're hesitant to ask questions," says Robin Schooley, industry specialist with WorkSafeBC's Young and New Worker Program. "They want to impress their boss and do a good job. They're so keen, and they don't want to look incompetent. But they don't have the confidence to speak up."

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—Robin Schooley, industry specialist with WorkSafeBC’s Young and New Worker Program

“We all get that feeling in the pit of our stomach when something just doesn’t feel safe, that sense of foreboding,” she says. “Experts will say listen to that. Trust your gut. There’s a reason for it. You’re wise to listen to that little voice. With this contest, we are really trying to explore that sense: Recognize that you have a voice and you’re not wrong or incompetent to use it. We really want kids to express themselves and think about how they can affect positive change.”

Music video, Claymation, comedy, drama, documentary, animation — all genres are acceptable as long as the videos are a maximum of two minutes.

The contest aims to effectively get safety messages across to young people, to make the subject accessible to them.

“Research shows that when it comes to youth, peer-to-peer messaging has more impact than messaging delivered by adults,” Schooley says. “When you get kids creating health and safety messages, it resonates with other kids. They speak the same language; they use references that would appeal to other youth.

“Each year I am amazed by the quality of videos we receive,” she adds. “Some are quite serious. But we also see a lot of humour, which can be effective in getting a message across. The intent is to raise awareness among young workers about their rights and responsibilities: What can they do and say when they encounter things that might put them at risk. Last year, we received 55 video entries and we’re hoping for even more this year.”

“Going into its 12th year, we don’t see this contest losing momentum anytime soon,” adds WorkSafeBC manager of Industry and Labour Services Glen McIntosh. “Video learning and sharing seems to be something that resonates for young viewers. Each hour,

300-plus hours of video are uploaded to YouTube and we know the youth audience is a significant consumer. Our videos live on YouTube and they are viewed over and over again and downloaded and shared.”

The annual contest is open to B.C. high school students who have a teacher sponsor. Students can choose to work alone or in groups with other students. Prize money for students and schools comes from corporate sponsors Seaspan, London Drugs, the British Columbia Safety Authority, and Actsafe, and is doled out in two categories: one for Grade 8 to 10 students and another for Grade 11 and 12 students. Four prizes of \$2,500 will be awarded to the top two videos in each category; the student or team of students receives \$1,000, while \$1,500 goes to the school. The top entry will also advance to a national contest to compete for additional prizes.

Deadline for submissions is Tuesday, March 28, 2017, at 5 p.m. The sooner a video is posted on YouTube, the more time people have to view and rate it. Full competition details are at [worksafebc.com/studentvideocontest](http://worksafebc.com/studentvideocontest), where past winning videos are also posted.

The contest has a far-reaching effect when it comes to raising safety awareness, Schooley notes.

“Often, kids work together on a project; they write the script and cast their friends and do research, so they themselves are learning and they’re sharing that with their friends and families,” she says. “Winning videos are shown in schools, and parents, teachers, and sponsors all see them. They’re also downloaded and played all over the world, so there’s a ripple effect.

“We want kids to find creative ways to express themselves,” she adds, “and they always do.” ☺