



Student film *Young Eddie* won the Actsafe Aspiring Filmmaker Award in the 15th annual student safety video contest.

# Students share their take on invisible injuries

By Gillie Easdon

The 15th annual WorkSafeBC student safety video contest wrapped with a new record — 75 submissions from schools across the province. We set a tight focus on two of this year's winning teams.

All over B.C., students in grades eight through twelve took on the challenge of creating a safety message centred on the theme: "Not all injuries are visible." Broken into two categories — grades 8–10 and grades 11–12 — each of the two-minute safety videos competed for cash grand prizes from B.C. sponsors, plus a chance to win the Actsafe Aspiring Filmmaker Award. The four first-place winners received \$2,500 (with \$1,000 going to the school for championing the contest and \$1,500 going to the student teams).

With a record-breaking 75 submissions, it's the most attention the contest has ever received says Robin Schooley, a WorkSafeBC industry specialist for new and young workers. She believes that there were so many more submissions this year because "the theme resonated with youth. They talk a lot more in school about mental health and mental injury."

## Hearing damage is irreversible

Drama teacher Marco Soriano, from Matthew McNair Secondary in Richmond, sponsored students Conor Madill and Mattias Fardy's collaboration on grades 11–12 prize-winner *Irreversible*. Soriano believes that educating youth about workplace safety is better received by a peer group than from adults. "It means more when the voice is coming from one of their own, when they share their perspective," he says.

In *Irreversible*, a young man (Fardy) wants to save for a custom Les Paul electric guitar, so he takes a shop job. There is no dialogue, but a mix of music and the scraping sounds of drills and saws. As the money adds up, an ongoing alert tone increases in volume. The young man finally buys his guitar. The alert is the only sound as the shot tightens on the ear protection he never wore — he can't hear his brand-new guitar.

The video not only went viral at the school, but won third place in the National Focus on Safety youth video contest held by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. The national contest has youth participants from all Canadian territories

and provinces. Asked how he felt about that, Madill admitted, “That’s huge — I can’t even think about that yet.”

No matter how he does in the national competition, Madil is expecting more film in his future. He’s been accepted into Langara College to continue with film in 2021.

For WorkSafeBC’s Robin Schooley, *Irreversible* emphasizes “the realization that what people do at work can affect them personally and affect the things they love and want to do.”

Schooley has been involved in the contest for 13 years. “The contest was promoted to nearly 600 schools this year. It’s getting much more diverse and keeps growing.” She credits the evolution and success of the contest to both the students’ technological skills as well as the dramatic advances in technology. In the early days, submissions were on VHS tapes.

## A spotlight on mental health

The film *Young Eddie* was the other winning film in the grades 11–12 category, from Brentwood College School in Mill Bay. Brainchild of Eamon Ryan, the film featured himself and Isaac Keen, Dylan Gauvin, and Edward “Eddie” Lalonde. It’s an upbeat music video, encouraging bosses to check in and believe their workers when it comes to anxiety and workloads. It also asks employers to “look further than the eyes,” as mental health concerns are not always visible.

“We wanted to have a fun day, fit the guidelines, and educate everybody. When it came to the theme, it’s

really broad and we wanted to try and cover as much as we could,” says Keen. Before this contest, Ryan admitted “I didn’t know much about safety in a workplace setting.” But now things have changed. “I’ve started to pay more attention to safety,” he says. He also believes his video can make a difference when it comes to other students understanding health and safety at work. “I think the video will have a positive subconscious effect (on other students).”

Brentwood’s director head and director of academics Cheryl Murtland helped the students submit the videos but doesn’t take any of the credit: “This was really all them. It was already complete when the students approached me to sponsor their entry.” Impressed by the fun treatment of the subject, she stated, “the message that they had and the way they presented it — it’s going to resonate more with youth than reading material or an adult talking about safety.”

*Young Eddie* also won the Actsafe Aspiring Filmmaker Award. This includes lunch with a prominent Canadian filmmaker, a behind-the-scenes tour of a local production, and a screening at a 2020 Directors Guild of Canada event. While some of these events have been delayed due to COVID-19, the intention is to still make them happen as soon as it’s safe to do so.

## For more information

The videos are available on YouTube, and can be found at [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com), by searching for the words “student safety video contest.” The theme for the 16th WorkSafeBC Student Safety Video Contest will launch in the fall. Watch [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com) for details. ☺



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