



young workers:

exposure to workplace hazards might be  
**making you sick**  
...you just don't know it yet

wear the  
get training  
know your rights  
ask questions  
wear the gear  
refuse  
unsafe work



## **GET TRAINING**

It's the only way you're going to know what to expect on the job. Your training and orientation need to happen **BEFORE** you start work. Your employer must educate you on potential hazards and safe work procedures.

## **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

You have lots of them! They range from asking questions to getting additional training when you want or need it to refusing unsafe work. Don't be afraid to demand a healthy and safe workplace. Your life could depend upon it.

## **ASK QUESTIONS**

How will you know unless you ask? Don't be in the dark about how to keep yourself healthy and safe. Ask questions until you're sure you're satisfied with the answers.

## **WEAR THE GEAR**

There should be safety measures (also known as controls) in place to keep you safe on the job. If your job requires you to wear personal protective equipment to keep you safe, make sure you **HAVE** it and **WEAR** it.

## **REFUSE UNSAFE WORK**

No job is worth risking your life for. Listen to that voice in your head and **STOP** working if you feel your work might be dangerous.

get

training

# unseen dangers hurt, too

Sometimes the hazards at your workplace are obvious. Sometimes you can't even see the dangers that can make you sick.

Whether you work in a retail store, a restaurant, an office, or a manufacturing plant, you could be exposed to hazardous materials in the air you breathe, in the chemicals or cleaners you use, and sometimes in the walls and other building materials that surround you.

## know and exercise your rights & responsibilities

Employers and owners/builders are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all workers. That means YOU and everyone else on the jobsite.

### **As a worker, you have a legal right to:**

- > On-the-job training on safe work practices, risk reduction, and emergency procedures – and extra training if you ask for it
- > Supervision to make sure you work without unnecessary risk
- > Employer-provided safety equipment required for your job (but you're responsible for your own safety footwear and headgear)
- > Say "no" to work you think is unsafe – without being fired or disciplined for doing so

### **You also have the following responsibilities:**

- > Follow health and safety requirements
- > Ask questions if you don't know how to do something safely
- > Report safety concerns and any injuries to your supervisor
- > Take the initiative to improve safety where you can

**REMEMBER:** Your employer should, first and foremost, work to eliminate or minimize your exposure to hazards. Personal protective equipment should only be used if the hazard cannot be eliminated or controlled in some other way.

# what risks do you face at work?

Depending on the kind of work you do, you may be exposed to multiple hazards. See the examples below.

	SOLVENTS	ASBESTOS	NOISE	BACTERIA	PESTICIDES	AMMONIA	LEAD	VIRUSES	SILICA DUST
Supermarket Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Server			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kitchen Helper				<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Construction Labourer		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Office Worker								<input type="checkbox"/>	
Farm / Greenhouse Worker				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Manufacturing Worker			<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		
Health / Child Care Worker				<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cleaner / Janitor	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	



# EXPOSED?

If you believe that you're not properly protected against exposure to a hazard,

## STOP WORK IMMEDIATELY

and discuss your concern with your supervisor.

Don't resume work until you're sure that the hazard is under control.

If you're still unsure, call the WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line at

**(604) 276-3100**

toll free **1 (888) 621-7233**



don't downplay  
the danger of noise

Hearing loss is common in environments where there's excessive noise. Loud machinery can contribute to hearing loss if you don't wear proper hearing protection. Even noisy environments such as loud restaurants, nightclubs, or bars can compromise your hearing.

iPods and other portable devices can also be dangerous at work. As well as potentially causing hearing impairment, these devices can distract you from other important sounds, such as approaching machinery, alarms, sirens, or warnings from other workers.

## WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?

**You could die.** Last year, 121 people died because of accidents at work. Of these, 51 died from asbestos exposure and 45 from other diseases. Others died from exposure to chemicals, smoke, or gasses.

Last year, 148,000 work days were lost as a result of occupational diseases. Exposure to substances such as chemicals accounted for 2,060 claims. Exposure reactions can range from a sneeze to a serious illness or worse.

## some stuff you might not know...

- > You can be fired if you refuse to do work that you think is unsafe.  
**Wrong.** You have the right to refuse unsafe work. Even if you think something is unsafe and later discover it's not, you have a right to raise that concern with your boss. Trust your gut and do what you think is safe first.
- > It's okay if you get exposed once or twice to an occupational hazard because it's not enough to hurt you. **Wrong.** Sometimes a single exposure can hurt or even kill you. Other times small exposures can accumulate and lead to increased sensitivity or, over time, to chronic illness or disease.
- > Only old people need to worry about exposure-related diseases. **Wrong.** People dying of occupational diseases today may have been exposed to harmful dusts and fibres (such as asbestos) when they were young like you. Diseases related to noise and chemical exposure can happen at any age – and when they do, you'll wish you could turn back time.
- > Some risks are just part of the job.  
**Wrong.** Hazards that can lead to an injury or disease are never acceptable.
- > The government regulates workplaces and makes sure people are safe from exposures. **Wrong.** WorkSafeBC inspects workplaces and monitors them for compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, but it's up to employers to ensure that all workers have a safe and healthy environment in which to work.



**LEARN MORE** Visit **WorkSafeBC.com** to download resources about occupational exposure. For more on rights and responsibilities, visit the Young Worker Portal at **www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/Home.asp**.

**QUESTIONS?** E-mail **yworker@worksafebc.com**.

Scan the tag with your smartphone to go directly to the WorkSafeBC Young Worker Portal.

Get the free mobile app at **gettag.mobi** or search "tag reader" in the App Store.



**WORK SAFE BC**

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



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