



International
Labour
Organization

Improving the Safety and Health of Young Workers



28 April 2018
World Day
For Safety and Health at Work

GENERATION
SAFE & HEALTHY



Improving the Safety and Health of Young Workers

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2018
First published (2018)

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Licensing), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: rights@ilo.org. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with a reproduction rights organization may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit www.ifrro.org to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

ISBN: 978-92-2-131650-3 (print)
ISBN: 978-92-2-131651-0 (web pdf)

This publication is also available in French and Spanish.

Credits

Page 2 (top), 6, 9, 22, 24, 27, 30, 37: Maxime Fossat © ILO
Page 2 (middle), 18 (top left): Nadia Bseiso © ILO
Page 8, 12, 15, 18 (top right, middle left), 20: © ILO
Page 11: Yo. Nyamdavaa © ILO
Page 17: Wei Xiangnan © ILO
Page 18 (top middle), 29: Nguyen Viet Thanh © ILO
Page 18 (middle right): A. DOW © ILO
Page 18 (bottom left, bottom right), 32: Marcel Crozet © ILO
Page 18 (bottom middle): Thierry Falise © ILO
Page 38, 39: Steve Lim © ILO

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

Information on ILO publications and digital products can be found at: www.ilo.org/publns.

Funding for this report was provided by the United States Department of Labor under Cooperative Agreement number IL-26690-14-75-K-11. This report does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.

Table of contents

Introduction	7
What do we mean by “young workers”?	10
Factors threatening the safety and health of young workers	11
Risk factors that are specific to young workers	12
Work hazards to which young workers are frequently exposed	14
Young workers in hazardous economic sectors	18
International labour standards that protect the safety and health of young workers	20
OSH standards that protect young workers	21
Fundamental standards pertaining to the elimination of child labour	23
A framework for national and regional action regarding OSH for young workers	24
Improving the collection and analysis of data and information on OSH and young workers	26
Developing, updating and implementing laws, regulations, policies and guidelines to better protect the safety and health of young workers	28
Capacity building aimed at helping governments, employers, workers and their organizations address the OSH needs of young workers	32
Integrating OSH into general education and vocational training programs, so as to build a safer and healthier generation of workers	34
Strengthening advocacy, awareness and research on young workers’ vulnerability to OSH hazards and risks	36
Youth participation in the creation of an OSH culture of prevention	38



Introduction

According to the latest estimates released by the International Labour Organization (ILO), 2.78 million workers die every year due to occupational accidents and work-related diseases.¹ Some 2.4 million (86.3 per cent) of these deaths are due to work-related diseases, while over 380,000 (13.7 per cent) result from occupational accidents. Each year, there are almost a thousand times more non-fatal occupational injuries than fatal occupational injuries. Non-fatal injuries are estimated to affect 374 million workers annually, and many of these injuries have serious consequences for workers' earning capacity in the long term (Hämäläinen et al., 2017).

Young workers have significantly higher rates of occupational injury than do adult workers. According to recent European data, the incidence of non-fatal injury at work was more than 40 per cent higher among young workers between the ages of 18 and 24 than among adult workers (EU-OSHA, 2007). In the United States, the risk that young workers between the ages of 15 and 24 will suffer a non-fatal occupational injury is approximately twice as high as that for workers age 25 or older (CDC, 2010).

Paradoxically, in view of the above, statistics indicate that the incidence of occupational diseases is lower among young workers than among older workers. This is not due to young workers having greater resistance to occupational diseases. Young workers are in fact more vulnerable to occupational diseases because they are still developing, both physically and mentally, and this makes them more susceptible to harm from hazardous chemicals and other agents. The lower incidence of occupational diseases among young workers is most likely due to the fact that occupational diseases often occur only after cumulative exposure and/or a latency period. Moreover, it is difficult to obtain accurate data on occupational diseases, and this is particularly the case with data on occupational diseases caused by the exposure to workplace hazards during youth (EU-OSHA, 2007).

As well as causing incalculable human suffering, occupational accidents and diseases constitute a significant economic cost, amounting to an estimated annual loss of 3.94 per cent of global GDP (ILO, 2017c). The cost to society of young workers being seriously injured and experiencing long-term impairment as a result can be much greater than the cost to society of adult workers sustaining similar injuries. The consequences of occupational injuries are more serious when these injuries occur at the beginning of a young person's working life. A young worker with a long-term impairment could cease to be an active member of society and make little use of the education and training that they have received.

¹ In 1987, the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health suggested that the term "work-related diseases" be used to describe not only recognized occupational diseases, but also other disorders to which the work environment and performance of work contribute significantly. For more information about the methodology used for producing global estimates and the criteria employed for the inclusion of work-related diseases, please consult the publication *Global Estimates of Occupational Accidents and Work-Related Illnesses 2017* (Hämäläinen et al., 2017).



Many countries are making significant investments in young people's employment, education, training, skills development and job creation. It is critically important to include occupational safety and health (OSH) in these programmes. In order to do so, it is necessary to understand and address the safety and health risk factors faced by young workers between the ages of 15 and 24. Young workers under the age of 18 are recognized in law and policy as a vulnerable group and provided with special protections under child labour standards and hazardous work prohibitions, but those between the ages of 18 and 24 do not receive comparable legal recognition or levels of protection in the workplace, despite their continuing and increased risk of injury.

The ILO has a long-standing commitment to the promotion of decent work and safe and healthy working conditions for all workers, throughout their working lives. It stresses the importance of improving OSH for young workers, both in order to promote decent youth employment and in order to contribute to efforts aimed at combatting hazardous child labour.² Of the 151.6 million children engaged in child labour globally, almost half (72.5 million) are engaged in hazardous child labour. Some 24 per cent (over 37 million) are between the ages of 15 and 17 (ILO, 2017b). Taking serious steps to address OSH for young workers has two benefits: improving the health and safety of young workers and reducing the number of children engaged in hazardous child labour.

² The worst forms of child labour, as defined in ILO Convention No. 182, include "work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children."

What is the Purpose of this ILO Brief?

The ILO has prepared this brief for the 2018 World Day for Safety and Health at Work, which aims to promote a safe and healthy generation. The goals of the brief are to describe the OSH risks faced by young workers and to encourage a global conversation on the need to improve their safety and health. The brief analyses the factors that increase the work-related risks that young workers face and describes legal, policy and practical steps for improvement.

To build a generation of safe and healthy workers, preparation must begin early, starting with parental and community awareness. For young people to be aware of risks and able to advocate on their own behalf, education about work hazards and risks, as well as about workers' rights, needs to start in school and continue through vocational training and apprenticeship programmes. Employers, including both formal and informal enterprises, and family businesses, need guidance on the risk factors that young workers face and on work tasks and conditions that are age-appropriate. Lastly, support and representation by workers' organizations, as young people enter the world of work, is essential if young workers are to be able to exercise their rights and voice their concerns.

Improving the safety and health of young workers will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 on decent work and economic growth. This will help us in reaching Target 8.8 on safe and secure working environments for all workers by 2030, and Target 8.7 on ending all forms of child labour by 2025. Reaching these targets requires that public authorities, employers, workers and their organizations, and other key stakeholders collaborate to create a culture of prevention that focuses on the safety and health of the next generation of the global workforce.



What do we mean by “young workers”?

The United Nations (UN), for statistical purposes, defines “youth” as persons between the ages of 15 and 24. This group represents more than 15 per cent of the world’s labour force, accounting for approximately 541 million people (ILO, 2016b). The term “youth” often refers to persons who are at the age where they are ending compulsory education and embarking on their first work experience.

Young workers experience many challenges in making the transition from school to work and in finding stable work where they are protected from harm and which pays a decent wage. They start their working lives by entering the world of work in different ways, for example, as:

- Students who work in their spare time (before or after school hours and during weekends and holidays)
- Students who take up job experience placements (apprenticeships, internships)
- Young persons who have completed or withdrawn from compulsory education and are starting their work life
- Young persons who work for family enterprises (paid or unpaid)
- Young employers and young self-employed workers.

Young workers exhibit varied levels of cognitive, psychosocial and physical development. According to international standards, age 18 is the dividing line between childhood and adulthood. Consequently, young workers fall into two major groups:

- Young workers above the minimum age of employment but under the age of 18.

These workers are considered “children” even where they may legally perform certain jobs. They are often protected by specific restrictions with respect to the types of work that they may do, the hazards to which they may be exposed and the hours that they may work. These restrictions are intended to protect children’s health and safety and reduce their risk of suffering occupational injury and disease. They take into account children’s rapid growth, stage of development, lack of experience and greater vulnerability to exploitation (IPEC, 2009).



- Young workers between ages of 18 and 24.

These workers are considered adults and are covered by the general laws and regulations on employment and working conditions applicable to all adult workers. Despite their relative lack of job experience, their continuing mental and physical development, and their vulnerability to workplace harm, they often no longer enjoy the protection of child labour restrictions, including hazardous work prohibitions or special provisions within OSH regulations. Consequently, they may be legally employed in almost any job without the benefit of restrictions regarding tasks and hours that apply to young workers who are above the minimum age of employment but under the age of 18.





Factors threatening the safety and health of young workers

Young workers are a heterogeneous group of workers and many factors affect the risk of occupational accidents and diseases to which they are exposed. These include stage of physical, psychosocial and emotional development; level of education; job skills; and work experience. While young workers' increased OHS risks are often associated with these individual factors, the workplace culture can also play a role in hindering their ability or readiness to speak out about OSH issues, or it can provide an enabling environment that leads to better health outcomes for young workers. Young workers are often unaware of their rights as employees and of their OSH responsibilities as young employers, and may be particularly reluctant to report OSH risks. Young workers also lack the bargaining power that more experienced workers may have. This can lead to their accepting dangerous work tasks, poor working conditions, or other conditions associated with precarious employment. Their presence in hazardous economic sectors and their exposure to the hazards found in these sectors further increase their risk of sustaining occupational injury and disease.



Risk factors that are specific to young workers

Various risk factors that are specific to young workers increase the likelihood that they will suffer harm from workplace hazards. These risk factors can be inherent to their age (for example, stage of physical, psychosocial and emotional development) or influenced by their age (for example, relative lack of skills, minimal experience, and lower levels of education).

Stage of physical development. Young workers, and especially adolescents, are at higher risk of suffering occupational injury and disease due to the fact that their bodies (including their brains)³ are still developing. Their reproductive systems and brain functions are particularly susceptible to hazards that interfere with the organs involved.

Moreover, where adolescents are concerned, higher respiratory rates and higher metabolic rates per unit of body weight cause their bodies to absorb more toxins and to experience more extreme reactions to the effects of these toxins.

Special attention needs to be paid to young workers' exposure to pesticides, neurotoxins, endocrine disruptors, allergens, or carcinogens. This is especially true in the case of adolescent workers, whose bodies are still developing at the cellular level. Lastly, workstations, tools, machinery and equipment are usually designed for adults and can impose higher demands on adolescent bodies (IPEC, 2011).

Stage of psychosocial and emotional development.

Young workers tend to be less able to discern the consequences of their actions and to assess risks associated with various situations, and are more susceptible to social and motivational pressures, including the desire to belong, to be considered attractive, and to achieve independence. These traits affect young people's decision-making and can result in risk-taking. They can also make young workers reluctant to speak up about difficulties regarding their work or about hazardous physical and psychological conditions (European Parliament, 2011). However, it should be borne in mind that behaviour during youth (and across the lifespan) is influenced by multiple, interacting factors, including brain development, experience, parenting, socioeconomic status, culture, psychological well-being, social relationships and interactions, and so on (Johnson et al., 2009).

³ The frontal lobes are among the last areas of the brain to mature and they may not be fully developed until the mid-twenties. The prefrontal cortex, which is situated in the frontal lobes, coordinates higher-order cognitive processes and executive functions (skills needed for goal-directed behavior, including planning, response inhibition, working memory and attention) (Johnson et al., 2009).

Job skills and work experience. Young workers often lack the skills and experience that they need for the work to which they are assigned, including an understanding of the safety and health hazards and risks associated with this work. A worker's risk of injury is four times greater during the first month in a new job than it is after just 12 months on the job, and a young worker's risk of harm in their first months in a job is higher than that of older workers (Smith & Breslin, 2013).

Level of education. A young worker's level of education appears to play an important role in their transition to stable and decent employment. Higher levels of education and training, and the experience of having worked while studying tend to make the transition to the labour market easier. Young people with higher levels of education are less often engaged in informal employment (ILO, 2017a). Workers with low levels of education tend to remain in the same job despite difficult working conditions (EU-OSHA et al., 2017). Awareness of workplace safety also appears to be positively influenced by education. Workers with higher levels of education have a better understanding of safety, are most compliant with safety procedures and suffer fewer accidents than workers with less education (Gyekye & Salminen, 2009).

Other cross-cutting factors affecting OSH risks for young workers. A number of factors work in combination with age to increase the risk of occupational accidents and diseases to which young workers are exposed. These include gender, disability and migration status. Young boys appear more likely to be engaged in hazardous work and to suffer more occupational injuries than young girls, but relevant figures may be biased because young girls are more likely to be working in informal employment, often unpaid family work, and this makes them "invisible" and, consequently, less likely to feature in official statistics (ILO, 2016b). Young people with disabilities tend to be at higher risk for exclusion, isolation, bullying and abuse, and they also tend to have fewer educational and economic opportunities (UNICEF, 2013). Migrant workers have occupational accident rates that are among the highest experienced by any group.

People under 30 years of age represent about 70 per cent of international migration flows,⁴ worldwide (ILO, 2004). Language barriers can increase the risk that migrant workers will suffer occupational accidents and diseases. If migrant workers do not understand the spoken or written language of the host country, they may have difficulty complying with workplace safety and health rules and procedures, or they may misunderstand warnings and information on the labels of chemical containers. Cultural attitudes and behaviours, their employment status (most of migrant workers are in precarious and seasonal work) and their need to prioritize income over all other considerations may prevent migrant workers from raising safety and health concerns (EU-OSHA, 2013a).

Young workers' OSH risks in the Nordic countries

The report entitled "Young workers' occupational safety and health risks in the Nordic countries" (Kines et al., 2013) offers important insights to understand and better prevent the OSH risks to which young workers between the ages of 15 and 24 are exposed in the Nordic countries. The report analyses four main categories of factors contributing to increased OSH risks for young workers:

- **Characteristics of young workers:** for example, varied physical, cognitive and emotional maturity levels; relative inexperience; risk-seeking behaviours often involving high levels of risk; lack of skills, training and OSH risk awareness and perception; social and interpersonal characteristics; and being in transition between school and work, and youth and adulthood
- **Nature of the work:** for example, shift work; part-time work; and short term, seasonal and on-call work
- **Workplace characteristics:** for example, OSH measures taken, including OSH training and supervision, the OSH culture and OSH management
- **Work characteristics:** for example, work presenting physical, chemical, biological, mechanical and psychosocial risk factors.

⁴ In 2015, over 51 million international migrants were between the ages of 15 and 29 (UNDESA, 2015).

Work hazards to which young workers are frequently exposed

The terms “hazard” and “risk” are sometimes used interchangeably, but in fact have different meanings. A “hazard” is anything with the potential to cause harm (for example, dust, chemicals, noise, working at height, manual handling, unguarded machinery, long or unpredictable working hours, etc.), while a “risk” is the combination of (a) the likelihood that a hazardous event will occur and (b) the severity of the harm that could occur, including long-term consequences. For example, machine operators are at increased risk of serious and possibly fatal injury if constantly using unguarded machinery, and workers who frequently lift and handle heavy or bulky objects are at risk of suffering musculoskeletal disorders, such as back pain.

The prevention of harm to workers requires that work hazards be identified and risks assessed, and that appropriate risk control measures be adopted through a comprehensive OSH management system.⁵

Hazard identification is the first step in the process. It requires that employers, with the active participation of workers, identify hazardous agents and situations that could harm workers, and determine which workers might be exposed to each hazard. An OSH management system should give special consideration to workers having unique risk factors, such as young workers. The focus of hazard identification should be on the relationship between the worker, the work task, the working conditions, the organization of the work, and the work environment. For adults, standard limits can help in the identification of hazardous situations. As young workers, and in particular adolescents, are still undergoing physical and psychological development, it is very difficult to determine the limits that their bodies and minds can tolerate. The lack of knowledge about the impact of work hazards on young workers’ health makes determining these limits especially difficult.

Several different kinds of hazard can exist in every workplace, with various consequences for the safety and health of workers. The following are types of physical and psychosocial hazards that are particularly threatening to young workers because of young workers’ increased risk of exposure and due to the underlying risk factors unique to them.

Safety hazards have the potential to cause injury immediately (for example, burns, strains, lacerations, bruises, broken bones, internal injuries, head trauma, and suffocation) if no risk control measures are in place. Safety hazards include, for example, working at height; using dangerous machinery, equipment or tools; driving, riding or working near vehicles; building trenches; walking on slippery surfaces and untidy floors; and working with or close to flammable or explosive materials or substances. Young workers may be particularly vulnerable to safety hazards because of their limited work experience, poor skills training, lack of information or instruction on safety hazards and procedures; and lack of supervision (IPEC et al., 2002).

Physical hazards include exposure to a range of different physical agents that can be harmful to health, such as noise, vibration, certain kinds of lighting, extreme temperatures (both heat and cold) and radiation (including exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun and from welding). Workers exposed to UV radiation when they are young have an increased risk of developing skin cancer during their adult life, due to their long-term exposure (as the exposure starts at an early age). Young workers are also more susceptible than are adults to hearing loss due to excessive noise. Noise exposure limits established for adults are inadequate for the protection of young workers (Forastieri, 2002). Young workers face significant exposure to excessive noise due to their employment in the hospitality, manufacturing and construction sectors.

⁵ According to the ILO Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (known as ILO-OSH 2001), preventive and protective measures should be implemented in the following order of priority: (i) eliminate the hazard; (ii) control the risk at source (through the use of engineering controls or organizational measures); (iii) minimize the risk by designing safe work systems (including administrative measures taken for risk control); and (iv) where residual risks cannot be controlled by collective measures, the employer should provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost and take measures to ensure its use and maintenance (ILO, 2001).



Biological hazards include exposure to bacteria, parasites, viruses, and dangerous animals, insects and plants. They can result in many different types of disease, such as skin, intestinal and respiratory diseases. Biological hazards are common in sectors of the economy in which large numbers of young people work, such as agriculture (contact with animals), food processing and restaurants (handling food), health care (contact with people, blood and other bodily fluids) and garbage/waste management.

Chemical hazards include gases, dusts, fumes, vapours and liquids. Chemicals are used in most workplaces, and in all sectors. For example, pesticides and fertilisers are found in agriculture; paints and solvents in manufacturing; asbestos, silica, thinners, adhesives, and welding fumes in construction; and cleaning agents in the service sector. The toxic effects of a substance depend on the dose and duration of exposure, and on other contributing factors, such as individual sensitivity and characteristics (e.g., gender and age). Exposure to chemical hazards when young can cause serious harm to reproductive systems and hormonal balance (Gerry, 2005).

Ergonomic hazards include carrying heavy loads; fast or repetitive movements; and poorly designed machines, equipment and work processes that cause workers to adopt awkward positions. Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) such as back pain; tendinitis, herniated discs and carpal tunnel syndrome are typical outcomes of exposure to ergonomic hazards. Adolescents carrying heavy loads are at higher risk of skeletal damage and impaired growth because their bodies are still growing and developing. Furthermore, work methods; tools and equipment are typically designed for adults, meaning that young workers whose bodies are not yet fully developed are at higher risk of fatigue, injury and MSDs (IPEC et al., 2002).

Risk factors that are specific to young workers

Stage of physical development

Stage of psychosocial and emotional development

Job skills and work experience

Level of education

Cross-cutting factors



Safety hazards

Physical hazards

Biological hazards

Chemical hazards

Ergonomic hazards

Psychological hazards

Work hazards to which young workers are frequently exposed



Psychosocial hazards are the result of the design and management of work and its social and organizational contexts, all of which can cause psychological or physical harm. A common response to psychosocial hazards is stress. Work-related stress can cause momentary distraction, errors of judgement, or failure in the performance of normal activities, increasing the risk of workplace accidents. It can contribute to the development of mental disorders (burnout and depression) and other physical problems (cardiovascular diseases and MSDs), as well as negative coping behaviours (alcohol abuse or smoking). Consequently, stress results in a deterioration of well-being and quality of life for workers (ILO, 2016a). Because young people continue to develop into their mid- twenties, mentally, emotionally and socially, their exposure to psychosocial hazards can be especially harmful.

Psychosocial hazards are usually divided into two main groups:

- Content of work: working conditions, for example, task design; workload and pace of work; work schedules
- Context of work: the organization of work and labour relations including, for example, organizational culture (the culture that exists around the issue of safety), leadership and management style, role in the organization, opportunities for career development, decision-making power and control, work-life balance; and interpersonal relationships at work (including workplace violence and harassment).

Where there is limited clarity about work tasks to be performed, and where workers have limited influence on the outcome of the work, this, in combination with other factors, can result in low motivation at work and low job satisfaction.

Young workers appear to be more vulnerable to workplace violence and harassment, including unwanted sexual attention because of a combination of different factors including type of work, form of employment and low bargaining power. The bullying of young workers is an issue that is receiving considerable attention.⁶ It is a contributing factor for the development of cardiovascular disease, depression, burnout, anxiety, nervousness, reduced job satisfaction and reduced well-being. Stressful and poorly organised work environments and poor leadership create a negative work climate, increasing the risk of bullying.

Poor work-life balance is also common among young workers, in part because they tend to accept shift work, seasonal work, weekend work and overtime (Kines et al., 2013).

⁶ According to the Nordic study "Young workers' occupational safety and health risks in the Nordic countries", three issues have been the focus of attention in recent years: bullying, well-being and "work ability". Work ability refers to the balance between an individual worker's resources and workplace management and demands. Well-being is influenced by physical, psychological, organisational and psychosocial factors, as well by as changes in society and technology (Kines et al., 2013).



Young workers in hazardous economic sectors

As young workers tend to have limited job skills, work experience and bargaining power, their opportunities are often limited to entry-level jobs and jobs that are undesirable because of low pay, excessive hours, precariousness and the hazardous nature of the work. This situation is exacerbated by a youth unemployment rate that currently runs three times higher than that of adults (ILO, 2018). Furthermore, large numbers of young people work in the informal economy (78.7 per cent of workers between the ages of 15 and 29), where they are more vulnerable to occupational accidents and diseases because informal economy jobs tend to give workers significant exposure to work hazards and provide them with limited social protection coverage (ILO, 2017a). Young workers are much more likely than adults to be engaged in non-standard forms of employment,⁷ where jobs are less stable and less protected. Those who are engaged in temporary work tend to have limited access to training and skills development because their work is only

short-term, and they are usually less informed about hazards and risks at work (EU-OSHA, 2007). They tend to change jobs often, and as a result rarely have the time or opportunity to become familiar with the OSH rules before they have to move and adapt again.

These working conditions of informality, instability and non-standard forms of work cut across all the economic sectors listed below and increase the vulnerability of young workers.

⁷ The ILO defines non-standard employment as consisting of four categories of employment: (a) Temporary employment (as opposed to open-ended employment); (b) Part-time and on-call work (as opposed to full-time work); (c) Multi-party employment relationships (as opposed to a direct, subordinate relationship with an end user); (d) Disguised employment/dependent self-employment (i.e. not part of an employment relationship).

Agriculture. Worldwide, 49.3 per cent of adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 and involved in hazardous work are working in agriculture (ILO, 2017b). Agriculture is considered one of the most hazardous sectors for workers of all ages. Agricultural workers have high rates of occupational accident and disease, as they are faced with a variety of hazards, including work with machines, vehicles, tools and animals; excessive noise and vibration; slips, trips and falls from height; the need to lift heavy weights and do repetitive work and work requiring awkward positions that result in MSDs; exposure to dust and other organic substances, chemicals, and infectious agents; and other working conditions characteristic of rural environments, such as exposure to the sun, extreme temperatures and inclement weather. Even though employment in agriculture is declining for both young and older workers, agriculture remains a major employer of young people in developing regions around the world. In developed countries, agriculture is highly mechanized and employs relatively few people, whereas in developing countries, it is mostly a low-tech sector, employing large numbers of low-skilled workers (ILO, 2017a).

Manufacturing. Large numbers of young workers who are transitioning into the labour market are employed in manufacturing. Despite recent declines in the percentage share of employment in manufacturing in many regions, this sector employs a significant number of young workers (for example, young workers comprise 9.7 per cent of all workers in manufacturing in Africa and 20.7 per cent in Eastern Europe and Central and Western Asia) (ILO, 2017a). In many developed countries, it is the sector with the highest proportion of occupational accidents involving young workers. The manufacturing sector includes a wide range of industries, among which are the automobile industry, the textile and clothing industry, the electronics industry, the chemical industry, the metallurgical industry, the food industry, and the consumer goods industry. These industries present numerous safety and health hazards for workers, such as the use of chemicals, machinery, vehicles and electric tools, and physical hazards, such as inadequate ventilation, high levels of noise, high temperatures and poor lighting.

Construction. This sector is attracting an increasing number of young workers in developing and emerging regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean) (ILO, 2017a). Many countries have banned the employment of children at construction sites, yet hazardous child labour in construction remains widespread (IPEC, 2011). Construction has one of the highest rates of occupational accidents and diseases of all industries, mainly because of the very hazardous nature of many construction tasks. For example, workers sometimes use dangerous machinery and materials, work at height, and are exposed to dangerous substances including dusty work environments. The high rate of occupational accidents and diseases is also due to certain characteristics of the construction sector, such as the high proportion of small firms and extended contracting chains; multi-employer worksites; high turnover and the extensive use of inexperienced, seasonal and migrant workers.

Mining and quarrying. Heavy and awkward loads, strenuous work, unstable underground structures, heavy tools and equipment, toxic dust and chemicals, and exposure to extremes of heat and cold make this industry dangerous for all workers, but particularly so for young workers. Working in this industry can be psychologically hazardous, given that mining often takes place in remote areas where laws, schools and social services are extremely limited, and where family and community support may not exist (IPEC, 2011). For these reasons, mining and quarrying are generally considered forms of hazardous child labour in which children are prohibited from working until they are 18 years old.

Services. The service sector, which includes the hospitality and health and social services subsectors, employs a growing number of young workers, worldwide (ILO, 2017a). A key characteristic of this sector is frequent interaction with customers, clients and patients. This characteristic increases the likelihood that workers will be exposed to psychosocial hazards, including verbal abuse, threats, humiliating behaviour, bullying, harassment, physical violence, and unwanted sexual attention. Mental health problems and MSDs are among the most common causes of absences from work in the sector.

Hospitality. The hospitality subsector, which is part of the service sector, also employs a growing number of young workers. Young workers in this sector perform physically and psychologically demanding work, often with monotonous, repetitive tasks that require no creativity or initiative. Common hazards and risks that they may face include standing for long periods; carrying heavy loads; use of dangerous machines and tools; the risk of burns, allergies and infections; poor lighting (for example, in clubs, bars and casinos); alcohol consumption; and physical violence and harassment (Kines et al., 2013).

Health and social services. The number of jobs in the health and social services subsector has been increasing worldwide, and young workers are taking up many of these jobs. This subsector is growing in developed and developing countries alike (ILO, 2017a). Healthcare workers are frequently exposed to ergonomic and psychosocial hazards, including workplace violence. They are also exposed to physical, mechanical and chemical hazards, as well as biological hazards, including blood, bodily fluids, and airborne contaminants that can expose them to contagious diseases.

Domestic Work. A large proportion of young people are employed in domestic service and unpaid family work, especially in developing countries (ILO, 2016b). Domestic work remains consistently undervalued and poorly regulated, and domestic workers continue to be overworked, underpaid and unprotected. The most common hazards to which domestic workers are exposed are long working hours and isolation. Moreover, they are relatively “invisible” where the authorities are concerned. Domestic work often involves the carrying of heavy loads, exposure to fires and hot stoves, the handling of household chemicals and the use of sharp knives (IPEC, 2013). Young girls and migrants who are domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse, in part due to the lack of reporting mechanisms, limited legal protections and the isolated nature of the work. Young domestic workers often have to give up educational opportunities, which places them at greater risk of suffering harm.



International Labour
Standards that protect
the safety and health of
young workers

OSH standards that protect young workers

The right to safe and healthy work is recognized for all workers, including both young and adult workers. The ILO Constitution (1919) established the principle that all workers should be protected from sickness, disease and injury arising from their employment. This principle was reaffirmed in the Philadelphia Declaration (1944) and other declarations made thereafter in various forums.⁸

The ILO's commitment to the promotion of decent, safe, and healthy work has been demonstrated by its contribution to the development of more than 40 international labour standards specifically addressing OSH. The key ILO standards on OSH establish the essential principles that guide national and enterprise-level OSH policies, systems and programmes.

Key ILO standards on OSH

- The **Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)** and its accompanying **Recommendation (No. 164)** set out the basic principles for national and enterprise-level policies and strategies aimed at promoting occupational safety and health and improving working conditions. The Convention also defines employers' responsibilities, the rights of workers and their representatives, and requirements regarding information, education and training. The Protocol of 2002 (No.155) incorporates specific provisions for the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases.
- The **Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)** and its accompanying **Recommendation (No. 171)** provide for the establishment of enterprise-level occupational health services, which are responsible for giving advice to the employers, workers and their representatives in the enterprise about the maintenance of a safe and healthy work environment.
- The **Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)** and its accompanying **Recommendation (No. 197)** promote a preventative safety and health culture through the development and implementation of national policies, systems and programmes on OSH. According to Recommendation No. 197, the national system should implement appropriate measures for the protection of all workers, in particular workers in high-risk sectors and vulnerable groups of workers such as those in the informal economy, and migrant and young workers. The Recommendation also promotes the use of a gender-sensitive approach when designing national systems, so as to provide for the protection of both women and men.

⁸ The Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work (2008), for instance, stated that the right to a safe and healthy work environment should be recognized as a fundamental human right, and not merely as a labour right.



While ILO OSH conventions provide for the protection of all workers from occupational accidents and diseases, some set out specific measures for the protection of young workers. The following list provides some examples.

- The **Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)** has a section on young workers and hazardous work, and states in Article 16 that the minimum age for assignment to work in agriculture which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the safety and health of young persons shall not be less than 18 years (exception may be permissible as from 16 years under strict conditions).⁹ The accompanying **Recommendation (No. 192)** provides for the adoption of health surveillance measures for young workers (Para 4.3).
- The **Construction Recommendation, 1988 (No. 175)** requires a minimum age (as prescribed by national laws or regulations) for drivers and operators of lifting appliances (Para 29).
- The **Asbestos Recommendation, 1986 (No. 172)** requires to devote special attention to the employment of young persons of less than 18 years of age in activities involving a risk of occupational exposure to asbestos (Para 1.3)
- The **Conditions of Employment of Young Persons (Underground Work) Recommendation, 1965 (No. 125)** calls for the adoption of measures designed to safeguard the life and health of young persons employed or working in underground mines.

- The **Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946 (No. 77)**, the **Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 (No. 78)** and the **Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No. 124)** require that there be pre-employment medical examinations for children and young persons under the age of 18 years, in order to check their fitness for the work in question, and they require that there be medical supervision until workers reach the age of 18. These requirements are extended to the age of 21 for occupations that involve high health risks.¹⁰ Furthermore, the **Medical Examination of Young Persons Recommendation, 1946 (No. 79)** recognizes that protection is still needed beyond the age of 18, as in most cases the adolescent stage of development does not end at 18 years of age (Para 7)
- The **Welfare Facilities Recommendation, 1956 (No. 102)**, in its Article 16 (1) states that in undertakings where any workers, especially women and young workers, have in the course of their work reasonable opportunities for sitting without detriment to their work, seats should be provided and maintained for their use.

Other ILO conventions provide for the protection of the safety, health and wellbeing of young persons. These provisions are to be found in instruments on labour inspection, hours of work, weekly rest, paid leave and night work. There are further provisions specific to young workers in conventions for the protection of young seafarers and conventions on fishing and dock work.

⁹ Article 16 (3) states that national laws or regulations or the competent authority may, after consultation with the representative organizations of employers and workers concerned, authorize the performance of work referred to in that paragraph as from 16 years of age on condition that appropriate prior training is given and the safety and health of the young workers are fully protected.

¹⁰ According to the **Medical Examination of Young Persons Recommendation, 1946 (No. 79)** it is desirable to extend the age limit for compulsory medical examinations to at least 21 years for all young workers employed in industrial or non-industrial occupations. This extension should apply to, but not be limited to, all mining occupations, all employment in hospitals, and employment in public entertainment such as dancing and acrobatics.

Fundamental standards pertaining to the elimination of child labour

A young worker under the age of 18 is still considered a child and protected by child labour regulations (IPEC, 2011). Most countries, guided by ILO standards, have adopted legislation to prohibit or place severe restrictions on the employment and work of children.

The **Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)** determines the minimum age for employment in different types of work and in countries exhibiting different levels of development. Article 3 of Convention No. 138 provides that the minimum age for any type of employment or work that by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons shall not be less than 18 years; the Article includes some exceptions. However, Convention No. 138 does not address the need for increased protection of workers aged 18 and over.

The **Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)** includes hazardous work as one of the four worst forms of child labour,¹¹ the elimination of which is considered an urgent priority for national and international action.

The convention requires that the national competent authority, in consultation with organizations of employers and workers, develop a hazardous work list, and that in listing types of hazardous work, they take into consideration the kinds of hazardous work referred to in the **Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation (No. 190)**. These include:

- Work that exposes children to physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- Work that takes place underground, under water, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces
- Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or work that involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads
- Work in an unhealthy environment, which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health
- Work under particularly

difficult conditions, such as work for long hours or during the night, or work that does not allow for the possibility of returning home each day.

Thanks to concerted global efforts to eradicate hazardous child labour, the number of 15 to 17 years olds in hazardous work fell from 47.5 million in 2012 to 37.15 million in 2016. However, 42 per cent of employed adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 were still engaged in hazardous work in 2016, constituting about 25 per cent of all children involved in child labour. (ILO, 2017b)

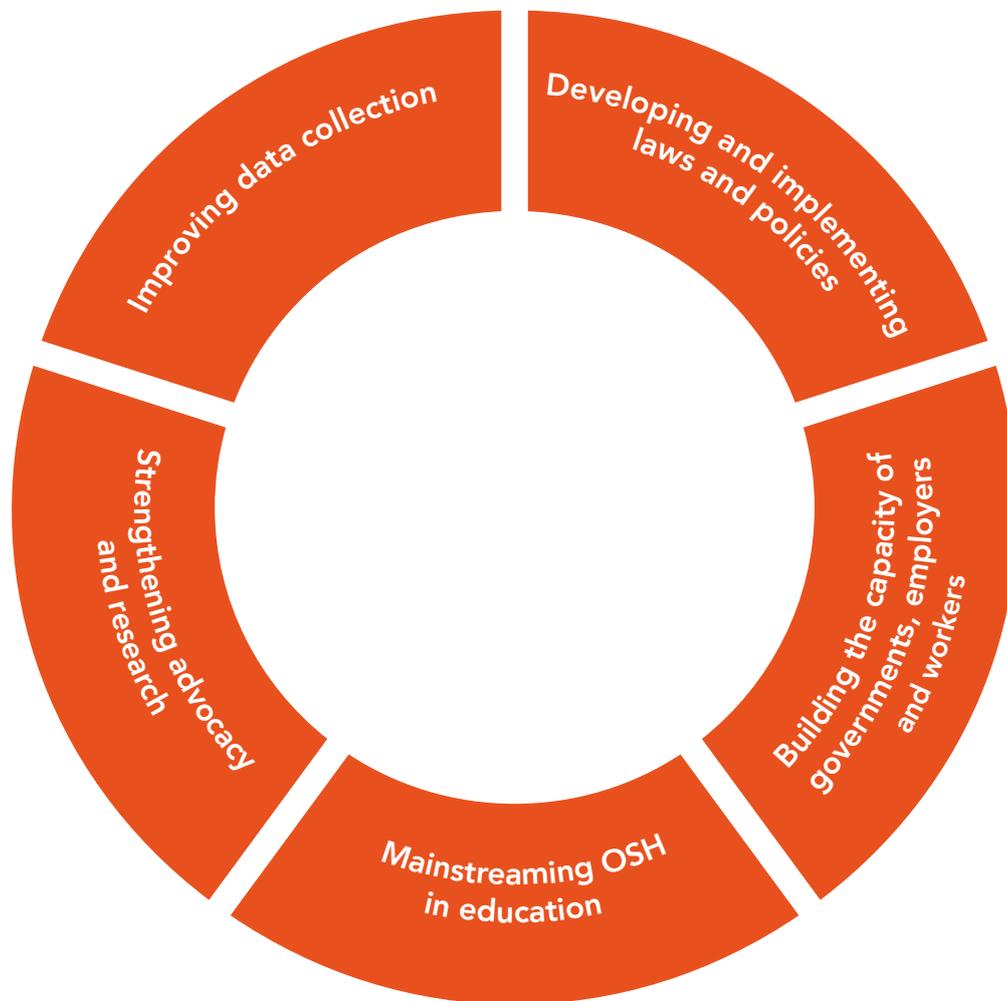
¹¹ Article 3 of Convention No. 182 defines the worst forms of child labour and includes under subparagraph (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. The types of work referred to under Article 3(d) are to be determined by national laws or regulations or by the authorities after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, taking into consideration relevant international standards.



A framework for national and regional action regarding OSH for young workers

The goal of improving OSH for young workers can only be achieved through the combined efforts of many different actors, including government institutions, employers and workers and their organizations, civil society, and importantly, young people and young people's organizations.

An effective response to the challenge of improving OSH for young workers should, therefore, focus on at least five main areas:



- Improving the collection and analysis of data and information on OSH and young workers
- Developing, updating and implementing laws, regulations, policies and guidelines to better protect the safety and health of young workers
- Capacity building aimed at helping governments, employers, workers and their organizations address the OSH needs of young workers
- Integrating OSH into general education and into vocational training programs, so as to build a safer and healthier generation of workers
- Strengthening advocacy, awareness and research on young workers' vulnerability to OSH hazards and risks.

ILO action focused on OSH for young workers

In 2015, the ILO launched an OSH flagship programme entitled "**Occupational Safety and Health - Global Action for Prevention (OSH GAP)**" with the aim of reducing the incidence of work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses and promoting a culture of prevention. Two of the initial projects within OSH GAP target the enhancement of OSH for young workers.

- The **SafeYouth@Work project** (funded by the U.S. Department of Labor) aims to improve working conditions for young workers through nation-wide capacity building, and it aims to promote a sustainable preventative safety and health culture. It is based on enhancing performance in four strategic areas: (1) OSH Data and Information; (2) OSH Law and Policy; (3) OSH Capacity; and (4) OSH Knowledge and Awareness.
- The **Youth4OSH** project targets young workers and young employers engaged in global supply chains in Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam. The project involves the development and testing of a range of tools and strategies for raising awareness of workplace safety and generating stronger public demand for improving national OSH systems.

Improving the collection and analysis of data and information on OSH and young workers

The development of an effective OSH system at the national and enterprise levels requires reliable data on occupational safety and health. Difficulties with collecting OSH data that are accurate, comparable and timely impair the analysis of the scope, nature, causes and impact of occupational accidents and diseases. Efforts to improve OSH conditions at national and enterprise levels may be misdirected or misapplied if timely, accurate and comprehensive data are not available. Consequently, effective data collection and analysis is critical for the identification of workplace hazards, hazardous sectors and vulnerable groups of workers.

Data are also important for the development of preventive measures that are relevant and effective. Sound data on OSH establish the evidentiary basis for setting priorities and measuring progress. Consequently, they are vital for the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes addressing young workers' vulnerability to OSH risks. Reliable OSH data on young workers are also essential to the development of preventive measures tailored to such workers. Data can also drive demand for much-needed policies and programmes, such as programmes that integrate OSH into education and skills training, or programmes aiming to determine young workers' needs while developing workplace OSH management systems.

On the occasion of the 2017 World Day for Safety and Health at Work, the ILO highlighted the urgent need to improve the collection and analysis of national OSH data. An ILO Toolbox with useful resources and information was issued to emphasize the need for OSH data and support member states in their efforts to optimize the collection and use of OSH data.

Governments are responsible for the development and implementation of a national system for the notification and recording of occupational accidents and diseases. An effective system should provide timely, comprehensive and reliable data on the incidence of occupational accidents and diseases. The system should cover all sectors, enterprises and workers, regardless of employment status. Young workers are frequently engaged in informal employment and temporary work, two categories often not covered by national notification and recording systems. Also excluded in many countries, are sectors such as the domestic service and agricultural sectors that employ large numbers of young workers. Using the data that results from the national notification and recording system, governments should regularly publish national statistics disaggregated by age, sex, migration status and sector; develop preventive OSH strategies and measures; and design appropriate and effective workers' compensation schemes.

National OSH Data Systems

The first step in developing a national notification and reporting system is the assessment of all relevant OSH data, which are often stored in the repositories of various national OSH, health and social insurance authorities. Governments should also establish and

implement specific procedures for the notification of occupational accidents and diseases, by employers, insurance institutions, occupational health services, hospitals, other health care providers, and other entities that collect such data. In many countries, some economic sectors do not have a notification and recording system, and not all employers and workers are included in to such a system.



Employers are responsible for recording occupational accidents and diseases and notifying the authorities. Employers who fail to comply with these recordkeeping requirements should face appropriate sanctions, as their non-compliance impairs the functioning of the entire national OSH system. Governments and employer organizations should ensure that employers have access to clear guidelines on how to meet these important requirements, and to training. The guidelines should provide guidance relating to the enterprise, sectoral and national levels.

Workers can provide information about their individual health status and that of their co-workers. Workers have much to gain from a successful programme and it is they who lose the most if the programme fails. They also tend to know more than anyone else about potential hazards associated with their jobs.

Worker information, therefore, frequently serves as an early warning system that allows employers to take remedial action before hazardous workplace conditions result in a worker suffering a recordable accident or disease.

Young workers, especially, should be encouraged to participate in the reporting of workplace accidents but also workplace incidents and near-misses. Without encouragement and reassurance, young workers often fear that speaking up about a workplace injury will result in their employer acting in a way that is unfavourable to them. This perception jeopardizes the important contributions that they can make to OSH measures. All workers should understand the importance of reporting occupational accidents and diseases to the employer and be able to do so without facing disciplinary measures.

EC-ULAT: A Work Accident Reporting System in the Philippines

In Philippines' Region VI (Western Visayas), the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) and the Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC) are pilot testing the "EC-Ulat: A Work Accident Reporting System". The objective of the reporting system is to improve the notification and recording of occupa-

tional accidents and provide an immediate response to inquiries through an innovative system that allows not only employers, but also workers and the public, to report accidents when they see them happen. Everyone is invited to report occupational accidents by using the webpage ec-ulat.me or sending a text message to the phone number created for this purpose. When an occupational accident report is submitted, ECC regional officers validate the report with the DOLE and the Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC) and take appropriate action.

Developing, updating and implementing laws, regulations, policies and guidelines to better protect the safety and health of young workers

ILO **Convention No. 187** calls for governments, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, to formulate a national policy to promote basic OSH principles. The policy should provide for the assessment of occupational risks or hazards, the combatting of occupational risks or hazards at source, and

the development of a national preventative safety and health culture that includes information, consultation and training. Priority areas for action should be identified and addressed when developing such policies. Close attention should be paid to workers at higher risk, such as young workers.

The Spanish Strategy on OSH for 2015–2020

The Spanish Strategy on OSH for 2015–2020 recognizes that the rate of occupational injury among young workers is higher than among other workers. The Spanish Strategy prioritizes the promotion of

safety and health for young workers and the identification and exchange of good practices (INSHT, 2015). To support this strategy, the Employers' Confederation of Navarra (Confederación de Empresarios de Navarra, CEN) produced a guide to help employers with OSH management and risk prevention for all young workers in small and medium enterprises. The guide describes specific requirements for workers under the age of 18 (CEN, 2015).

Laws and regulations should reflect international standards on improving OSH and eliminating child labour. Almost all ILO member States have ratified **Convention No. 182**, which requires them to "take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency" (Article 1). The Convention lists four "worst forms of child labour". The fourth item in the list is "work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children." Most of the children engaged in child labour fall into this category. One way of achieving the goals of eliminating hazardous work and protecting the health, safety and morals of children is to set up well-functioning national and enterprise-level OSH systems. Member States have committed to identifying the types of work that young people under the age of 18 should be prohibited from performing because of the likelihood that, due to its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, it will harm their health, safety or morals. The identification of these types of work often results in a "hazardous child labour list."

The **ILO NATLEX Database** on national labour, social security and related human rights legislation recently added a search category for "hazardous child labour".¹² This enables users to quickly find national standards in this area and related legal references. The concern for the safety and health of young workers should not be limited to young people under the age of 18; it should extend to all young workers. It should be expressed in national laws, regulations and policies that address the risk factors that cause young workers to suffer harm from workplace hazards.¹³

¹² NATLEX includes over 88,000 records covering 196 countries and over 160 territories and subdivisions. Records provide full texts or abstracts of legislation and citation information, indexed by subject classification.

¹³ The ILO has developed The Tripartite Process of Determining Hazardous Child Labour to help member States organize and facilitate the Tripartite Consultations that will result in either a new or a revised list of hazardous child labour for the country. This guide provides instructions on how to plan and conduct the process so that the tripartite consultation is carried out in accordance with Conventions No. 138 and No. 182. It also provides practical and easy access to reference materials that will assist the tripartite members of the consultation in their deliberations.

The Andean Community's Occupational Safety and Health Instrument (2004)

The Andean **Community's Occupational Safety and Health Instrument** prohibits the hiring of children and adolescents for work involving unhealthy or dangerous activities that may affect their physical and mental development. The national legislation of each member State must establish the minimum age for employment in such jobs; it should not be less than 18 years. The instrument requires that employers perform an assessment of the job before introducing

children and adolescents into the workplace; determine the nature, degree and duration of exposure to risk; and adopt preventive measures that are necessary for addressing workplace risks. Employers must provide pre- and post-employment, as well as periodic, medical examinations for working children and adolescents. When young workers over the age of 18 but under the age of 21 perform work considered unhealthy or dangerous, annual medical examinations must be carried out until such workers reach the age of 21. An occupational health specialist should conduct such examinations and the results should be provided to the young worker's parents or guardian (Comunidad Andina, 2004).



ILO **Convention No. 155** requires that employers provide workers and their representatives with appropriate training on OSH. Many countries include training requirements in their OSH legislation, often with specific requirements for the initial training of

new employees. The Convention also requires that ratifying states adopt measures to promote the inclusion of OSH education at all levels of education and training, including higher education.

The Oklahoma “Mainstreaming OSH into Education” Law

In the United States, Oklahoma was the first state to pass a “**mainstreaming OSH into education**” law

(2015) requiring state labour and education authorities to provide workplace safety training in schools for students in grades 7 through 12 (namely, 12 to 18-year-old students). The State of Texas recently passed a similar law and two additional states, California and Arkansas, are currently considering legislation modelled on the Oklahoma’s law.

OSH legislation should protect the physical and mental health of all workers, including the many young people working in the informal economy. Expanding OSH legal protections to cover workers in the informal economy is an important way to protect young workers, as are strategies to promote the transition from informal to formal employment. When addressing the challenges presented by the informal economy, member States and social partners can be guided by the ILO **Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation (No. 204)**, adopted in 2015.

Labour inspection has a critical role to play in protecting the safety and health of young workers. Labour inspectorate functions include the enforcement of OSH laws and regulations; the provision of technical information and advice on compliance, for employers and workers; and the identification of defects or abuses not specifically covered by existing laws. Initiatives by labour inspectorates targeting child labour and the safety and health of young workers in very hazardous jobs and sectors can be very effective in enhancing the health and safety of young workers.



Labour Inspection Blitz in Ontario (Canada)

Between July and September 2016, Labour Inspectors in Ontario conducted an “enforcement blitz” in the industrial sector, focusing on young workers between the ages of 14 and 24 and new workers who had been on the job for less than six months (Ontario Ministry of Labour, 2016).

The goals of the blitz were to:

- Ensure that employers informed new and young workers about hazards in the workplace
- Raise awareness among new and young workers of their OSH rights and responsibilities
- Encourage employers to identify and control hazards, particularly including those affecting young workers
- Address and remedy non-compliance with OSH laws and regulations.

Final responsibility for compliance with OSH laws and regulations lies with employers. It is their duty to care for the safety and health of their employees. Many OSH legal frameworks require that employers adopt OSH management systems and practices that include activities aimed at prevention, such as risk assessment and control, training and information for workers, surveillance of workers’ health, emergency planning, investigations into accidents, and the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases. Many countries have also introduced legislation requiring that OSH committees be established and OSH workers’ representatives appointed. Employers

should ensure that risk factors specific to young workers are recognized and addressed by such management systems and practices. Young workers should also be specifically included in mechanisms for worker consultation and collaboration on OSH.

Governments and other national institutions, such as employers’ and workers’ organizations, should develop tools and guidelines to promote compliance with OSH requirements, improve working conditions and prevent risks in the workplace. These tools should include a specific focus on young workers’ needs.

Australian Fair Work Best Practice Guides

In Australia, the Fair Work Ombudsman has produced two guides that describe best practices with respect to young workers:

- The **Employer’s guide to employing young workers** explains what an employer should tell a young worker early on in the employment relationship, stresses the importance of health and safety for young workers, and underscores the importance of ensuring that there is no bullying in the workplace (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2013);
- The **Guide for young workers** focuses on young workers’ rights, entitlements and responsibilities in the workplace, with a special section on OSH (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2017).

The ILO also has produced guidelines aimed at helping employers and workers protect adolescents from hazardous child labour. These include the **Employers’ and Workers’ Handbook on Hazardous Child Labour** (2011) and the **Safe work for youth Kit** (2009). Other ILO publications provide more general guidance on how to promote OSH for all workers. The publication entitled **Guidelines on occupational**

safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001), for example, contains advice for national institutions, employers, workers and their respective organizations, on how to establish, implement, and improve OSH management systems in order to reduce occupational accidents and diseases for all workers.¹⁴

¹⁴ The ILO has developed practical and easy-to-use tools for risk assessment and risk management. These include A 5-Step guide for employers, workers and their representatives on conducting workplace risk assessments, and the Training package on workplace risk assessment and management for small and medium-sized enterprises.



Capacity building aimed at helping governments, employers, workers and their organizations address the OSH needs of young workers

Sustainable progress on OSH for young workers requires more than just better data and laws and policies that address the needs of young workers. It requires that all tripartite constituents and interested stakeholders participate in capacity building.

To fulfil their duty to protect workers' safety and health, employers should, at minimum, be familiar with the process of risk management and they should be strongly encouraged to implement OSH management systems that are tailored to their workplaces. They should identify workplace hazards, assess the risks, account for specific worker vulnerabilities, identify situations of hazardous child labour and adopt effective prevention and risk control measures. Findings from workplace risk assessments should be incorporated into OSH training for all new and young workers and included in periodic and ongoing training for

all workers. Employers' organizations have a critical role to play in helping their members acquire adequate skills and understand the importance of risk management.

Collaboration with workers is necessary for the elimination of hazards, for the minimizing of risks and for the improvement of working conditions. The collaboration should be with workers' OSH representatives and OSH joint committees. In order to adequately represent young workers, OSH representatives need to be aware of the risk factors that young workers face and they should be provided with information and guidance on how to address the OSH vulnerabilities of young workers. Trade Unions increasingly recognize the importance of having young workers as members and the importance of involving them in the organization of campaigns and actions to promote their rights at work, but considerable work remains to be done.

The UK Trade Union Congress's Guide on Apprenticeships

In the United Kingdom, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have produced a handbook entitled **Apprenticeships: A short guide for union safety representatives**, that advises OHS representatives on how to ensure that employers provide apprentices and other trainees with a safe and healthy work environment, as well as

adequate support and guidance. The handbook recommends a number of approaches that can be taken, such as encouraging young workers and apprentices to join the union; making young workers a standing item on the OSH committee agenda; ensuring that young workers are protected in the manner that the law requires; checking that young workers have the necessary education in OSH, can access ongoing OSH training, and have adequate supervision; and ensuring that OSH representatives are consulted on the recruitment and employment of young workers (LSC & TUC, 2005).

Governments, employers' organizations and trade unions must play an important role in bringing about OSH in the informal and rural economies, both of which employ large numbers of young workers and child labourers, and in which hazardous working conditions are often found. Training and information should be provided through various channels in

order to improve the skills and knowledge of informal and rural workers regarding OSH (including young workers). As there are large numbers of girls working in these sectors, a gendered approach should be adopted so as to ensure that these girls are included in training and awareness-raising initiatives.

The Ghanaian General Agricultural Workers' Union's Manual for Cocoa Communities

The General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) is the largest worker organization of farmers and agricultural employees in Ghana. Its membership extends to wage and non-wage agricultural workers in formal establishments and rural communities, includ-

ing young workers. In 2014, GAWU, together with ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), developed the manual entitled **Eliminating hazardous child labour and Occupational Safety, Health and Environmental risks - A Manual for agents of change in cocoa communities in Ghana**. This hands-on training package is aimed at farmers and includes discussions of the vulnerability of children and adolescents to the effects of hazardous work in cocoa farming (IPEC & GAWU, 2014).

Integrating OSH into general education and into vocational training programs, so as to build a safer and healthier generation of workers

Sustainable progress towards a culture of workplace prevention requires a focus on capacity building for young workers, who may be motivated to contribute to the development of preventive measures.

Integrating occupational safety and health into general and vocational education is a highly effective way of building OSH awareness, knowledge and skills among young workers and young employers. As young people are the future of any society, and important drivers of cultural change, basic OSH information should be integrated into school curricula, technical training and educational programmes developed by civil society organizations. This would help ensure that young people are aware of the need to protect their safety and health, and that they are aware of their right to do so.

In some countries, basic education on risk prevention is included in primary school curricula. In others, experts are developing an approach that focuses not only on educational content, but also on the premises

at which the teaching is carried out. Pupils and young students are called on to play an active role in health and safety-related aspects of their school environment, as part of their learning.

A recent study conducted by the French National Research and Safety Institute for the Prevention of Occupational Accidents and Diseases (Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité, INRS) found that for young workers who received OSH teaching at school, the occupational accident rate was 50 per cent lower than for young workers who did not (INRS, 2018). Effective OSH education enables young people to adopt prevention-oriented attitudes and behaviours; develop the skills and abilities needed for the identification of hazards and risks; and develop effective OSH solutions, whether these young people be in school, at work, or otherwise contributing to society. There are many excellent examples of initiatives integrating OSH into school curricula, and these should be complemented by research addressing their impact and effectiveness.

Examples of OSH education and training tools for teens

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), developed the **Health + Safety Teaching Tools** to provide support to teachers who are educating their students about staying healthy and safe when they enter the workforce. The content is mainly geared towards middle and secondary school students, but can easily be adapted so that it works for a younger audience.

The U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) designed the **Youth@Work—Talking Safety** to teach young people OSH basics in a fun and interesting way. This free curriculum has been customized for each state in the United States so that it is consistent with the state's own child labour rules and regulations. The activities described within it highlight hazards and prevention strategies from a wide variety of workplaces at which young

people are employed. Recently, an assessment tool was added; it measures students' understanding of workplace safety and health, and students receive a digital badge if they pass.

The California Partnership for Young Worker Health and Safety brings together government agencies and state-wide organizations representing educators, employers, parents, job trainers and other stakeholders. It has developed strategies to protect young people at work. Its projects include the **Young Worker Resource Centers in California**, which provide information, training, educational materials, technical assistance and referrals to help educate young people, employers and the community about OSH and the protection of young workers. Its website, **Young-workers.org**, includes information for teens, parents, teachers, job educators and employers.

The European Union “Whole-School” Approach

In the European Union, efforts have been made to integrate OSH education into general education. For example, the European Community OSH 2002–2006 strategy included education on safety and health, as did the 2007–2012 strategy. The EU OSH Strategic framework 2014–2020 states that awareness raising about OSH starts at school.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) report entitled **Mainstreaming occupational safety and health into education. Good practice in school and vocational education** (2004) gives a comprehensive overview of examples of good practice from throughout Europe and outlines steps towards a systematic strategy aiming to integrate OSH education into education at the European level. The EU-OSHA report entitled **Occupational safety and health and education: a whole-school approach** (2013), describes this approach and contains several case studies.

A “whole-school” approach to OSH:

- combines risk education and the management of safety and health in schools, for both pupils and staff
- brings together risk education, health education, safety management and the concept of the healthy school
- actively involves staff and pupils in school safety management
- trains and involves teachers in OSH management in their schools, improving their understanding of OSH and developing their practical skills. This makes them better able to provide risk education to pupils.
- develops students’ understanding of OSH and its importance through the use of examples
- involves pupils in hazard spotting and in proposing solutions, developing their skills and giving them a sense of ownership with respect to their school’s safety rules
- integrates risk education and school safety and health into all the school’s activities and systems, so that they become part of school life rather than something extra that is brought in.

EU-OSHA and the Napo Consortium have worked together to produce a series of OSH education toolkits for teachers, entitled **Napo for teachers**. These toolkits aim to introduce health and safety topics to primary school children in an educational yet fun and imaginative way, using Napo’s short films and creative activities.

The **European Network Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health (ENETOSH)** offers an online platform for knowledge-sharing on issues concerning education and training in OSH. Its aim is to mainstream OSH into education and training. Based on the idea that safety and health are an integral part of lifelong learning, the work of ENETOSH covers all areas of education (from kindergarten to high school; initial vocational education and training; higher education; and continuing vocational training). ENETOSH collaborates with its members to collect and assess examples of good practice and tools for education and training in OSH (see **good practice examples and tools**) and it makes information about these available on its website. It also has an annual **newsletter** focusing on the topic.¹⁵

In 2015, the ERASMUS+ Programme of the European Union (in collaboration with ENETOSH and EU-OSHA) launched the **MIND SAFETY – SAFETY MATTERS! Project** to provide a collaborative and inclusive learning approach for OSH. The project aims to help teachers and teenagers develop their skills and knowledge with respect to OSH, and it includes an online platform, user guides and other materials. Partners from five countries (the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Spain) are participating in the project.

¹⁵ In Finland, OSH issues are integrated into the on-the-job learning programme entitled “Introduction to Working Life” (Työelämään tutustuminen, TET). This programme teaches participants about workplace hazards, employment contracts, working hours and ways of giving notice about leave. More information is available at www.oph.fi/english. The Romanian education system provides OSH courses, mainly at post-graduate level. However, a network was recently established to promote education from an early age on safe behaviour, and to promote the teaching of OSH in schools, on a regular basis. In 2014 and 2015, national OSH Contests were conducted by the Labour Inspection Unit, and prizes were given to the best school teams, comprised of both teachers and pupils.

Strengthening advocacy, awareness and research on young workers' vulnerability to OSH hazards and risks

Continuing support for conducting and disseminating OSH research on young workers is critical. An increasing number of OSH agencies and institutions are studying young workers. According to an ILO 2017 survey of 78 OSH agencies and institutions, and research centres and universities, 62.8 per cent consider young workers to be a pertinent area for OSH

research. Over 20 per cent consider young workers a high priority for OSH research (ILO, forthcoming). Health research has tended to concentrate on young children rather than on adolescents, on developed rather than on developing countries, and on schools and social life rather than on the workplace.

Suggested topics for future research

Young workers in transition and OSH risks: Analysing the relationship between increased OSH risks and "being young," taking into account the fact that many young people are in transition from school to work and from youth to adulthood.

A multi-dimensional and comprehensive approach: Exploring ways to overcome the traditional, one-dimensional approach focused on young workers' characteristics alone and considering the ways in which different factors work together to contribute to young workers' increased vulnerability to OSH risks. For example, examining young person-specific characteristics together with working conditions, work organization and workplace characteristics.

Social, emotional and motivational issues: Examining social, emotional and motivational issues in a particular work context, as these may have a significant influence on young workers' behaviour and their willingness to speak out about OSH issues. Such issues might include peer pressure and support, workplace norms and values, OSH culture, and management style. More studies are needed to advance understanding of the relationship between age and the culture of safety, and consequences for the occupational safety and health of young workers.

OSH training and supervision: Investigating the impact of high-quality and effective (a) ways of introducing OSH; (b) OSH training and supervision of young workers; and (c) strategies for ensuring that OSH training and supervision are conducted, particularly in non-standard forms of employment.

Adapting OSH management systems to young workers: Examining the ways in which OSH management systems and risk assessments can be enhanced to include the specific risk factors that young workers face.



Awareness-raising campaigns on OSH, and the use of real-world experiences when teaching young workers about OSH are effective ways of disseminating essential information and of sensitizing workers, parents, employers, schools, and communities about young workers' rights and vulnerabilities. These campaigns can be organized by governments or national institutions, employers' organizations, trade unions, youth associations, NGOs, and other civil society organizations.

OSH awareness campaigns can be greatly enhanced and expanded through the involvement and support of the news media and social media platforms. Journalists need to be made aware of issues relating to OSH and young workers, and provided with the information and skills needed to report on these issues. Real time reporting on stories about OSH and young workers will help to disseminate knowledge and increase awareness and public demand for improvements in workplace safety and health.

OSH Campaign for Teenagers in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Occupational Safety and Health Council launched the Youth Occupational Safety and Health Promotional Campaign to promote OSH among teenagers when they take up part-time jobs or summer jobs. The campaign includes a series of activities, such as the distribution of OSH information kits, the organizing of seminars and the airing of radio programmes that stress the importance of OSH for young workers. As part of the campaign, the "Teen power 2017–18 GIF Design Competition" was organized with the aim of involving students in the dissemination of OSH messages that would appeal to young people (Hong Kong OSHC, 2017).

Young Workers within Trade Unions

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) recognizes the importance of organizing and empowering young workers within the trade union movement. ITUC has sought to better reflect the needs and expectations of young workers in its policies and activities, and for this purpose, it adopted the **Economic and Political Agenda for Young Workers** in 2017. As part of this Agenda, young trade union members committed to organizing various activities, including campaigns that address issues specific to young workers (ITUC, 2017).

The Victorian Trades Hall Council in Australia recently created a **Young Workers Centre** with the aim of organizing young workers and empowering them with the knowledge and skills needed to fight for safe and secure jobs. The Young Workers Centre also provides a space for young people to connect with others who have experienced problematic situations in the workplace.



Youth participation in the creation of an OSH culture of prevention

Where there is a culture of prevention, there is respect for the right to a safe and healthy work environment at all levels, and governments, employers, and workers actively participate in securing a safe and healthy work environment through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties. The principle of prevention is given high priority. When building a sustainable culture of prevention with respect to OSH, special attention should be given to hazardous sectors and industries and to vulnerable workers, such as young workers employed in workplaces where the risk of harm is high.

Directly involving young workers and their organizations in the development and implementation of preventive measures is critical, as it makes it possible for their concerns to be addressed during the discussion about how to create a generation of safe and healthy workers. Civil society and traditional OSH institutions and their social partners often lack the knowledge and means to advocate effectively on young people's behalf. Moreover, because large numbers of young workers are involved in non-standard forms of employment and in informal work, they are "invisible" and deprived of bargaining power and effective representation. Their relative lack of power and voice contributes to the unfortunate situation whereby young workers a group are overlooked in the OSH legal and policy framework, and also overlooked during the design of OSH training and awareness campaigns, and when research priorities are determined. Public institutions must be prepared to support young people in their efforts to determine their future by providing them with resources and opportunities to be actively engaged.

Safe Youth @ Work Action Plan

In September 2017, the ILO organized the SafeYouth@Work Congress, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower of Singapore. It was part of the ILO's SafeYouth@Work project and took place during the XXI World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, held in Singapore. The SafeYouth@Work Congress brought together 125 young workers, employers, unionists and students, to create a global network of young OSH champions. Young people were invited to share their opinions about the obstacles to safety and health that young workers face and to propose their own solutions for promoting safety and health in the workplace. They had the opportunity to discuss these issues and interact with international OSH experts, government representatives, employers' and workers' organizations, non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations. The exchange led to the development of a framework for action for the next few years, and forms the basis of the SafeYouth@Work Action Plan.

After the World Congress, a series of consultative forums were organized with the goal of discussing and validating the Action Plan. These forums took place during the A+A ILO International Conference (Düsseldorf, October 2017); during the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour (Buenos Aires, November 2017); and during the Asia Sub-Regional Consultation on the SafeYouth@Work Action Plan (Jakarta, January 2018).



In order to bring together the input received and to finalize the SafeYouth@Work Action Plan, a Drafting Committee comprised of OSH experts, representatives of employers and workers, and five Youth Champions was convened in February 2018. The Drafting Committee has now developed the SafeYouth@Work Action Plan, the purpose of which is to guide ILO Member States and constituents in their efforts to improve the safety and health of young workers. The Action Plan identifies key actors who are essential for the achievement of sustainable reductions in the number of young worker affected by occupational accidents and diseases, including governments, employers' and workers' organizations, young people and their organizations, and members of civil society committed to improving OSH. The Action Plan identifies the steps that must be taken to bring about changes in OSH for young people across five critical areas: research, education, compliance, advocacy, and networks. For each of these areas, the Action Plan seeks to guide priorities and promote innovation. These efforts are intended to engage young people and connect them with the broader OSH community. They are also intended to secure the commitment that all key actors have to the achievement of a safer and healthier future for young workers, and to assist them with creating a generation of safe and healthy workers.

The ILO is launching the SafeYouth@Work Action Plan as part of the 2018 World Day for Safety and Health at Work campaign.

Bibliography

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC. (2010). "Occupational Injuries and Deaths Among Younger Workers: United States, 1998--2007" in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, vol. 59, no. 15, pp. 449-455, April 2010.
- Comunidad Andina. (2004). *Decision 584. Instrumento Andino de Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo*.
- Confederacion de Empresarios de Navarra, CEN. (2015). *Guía: Gestión de la prevención de riesgos laborales de los trabajadores más jóvenes*. CEN.
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, EU-OSHA. (2004). *Mainstreaming occupational safety and health into education: good practice in school and vocational education*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- (2007). *OSH in figures: Young workers - Facts and figures. European risk observatory report*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- (2013a). *Cultural diversity in OSH Leadership and Worker Participation*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- (2013b). *Occupational safety and health and education: a whole-school approach*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Cedefop; Eurofound; & EIGE. (2017). *Joint report on Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies. (2011). *Occupational health and safety risks for the most vulnerable workers*. Bruxelles.
- Fair Work Ombudsman. (2013). *Best Practice Guide. An employer's guide to employing young workers*. Commonwealth of Australia.
- (2017). *Best Practice Guide. A guide for young workers*. Commonwealth of Australia.
- Forastieri, V. (2002). *Children at work: Health and safety risks (2nd edition)*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Gerry, E. (2005). „An Introduction to the Topic“ in GOHNET Newsletter. *Topic: Child labor & adolescent workers*, Issue 9, Summer 2005.
- Gyekye, S. A.; & Salminen, S. (2009, January). „Educational status and organizational safety climate: Does educational attainment influence workers' perceptions of workplace safety?“ in *Safety Science*, vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 20-28, January 2009.
- Hämäläinen, P.; Takala, J.; & Boon Kiat, T. (2017). *Global Estimates of Occupational Accidents and Work-related Illnesses 2017*. XXI World Congress on Safety and Health at Work. Singapore: Workplace Safety and Health Institute.
- Hong Kong Occupational Safety & Health Council, OSHC. (2017). „Youth Occupational Safety and Health Promotional Campaign“ [Online]. Available at: http://www.oshc.org.hk/eng/main/awards_campaigns/ [Accessed 06 February 2018].
- Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité, INRS. (2018). „Synthèse étude INRS Accidents des jeunes travailleurs. Recevoir un enseignement en santé et sécurité au travail réduit le risque d'accidents du travail chez les moins de 25 ans.“ INRS.
- Instituto Nacional de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo, INSHT. (2015). *Estrategia Española de Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo 2015-2020*. Madrid: Servicio de Ediciones y Publicaciones del INSHT.
- International Labour Organization, ILO. (2001). *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2004). *Toward a fair deal for migrant workers in the global economy, Report VI, Sixth item on the agenda*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2011). *Employers' and workers' handbook on hazardous child labour*. Geneva: International Labour Office, Bureau for Employers' Activities, Bureau for Workers' Activities.
- (2013). *10 Keys for Gender Sensitive OSH Practice – Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming in Occupational Safety and Health*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

- (2016a). *Workplace stress: A collective challenge*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2016b). *World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Trends for youth*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2017a). *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2017b). *Global estimates of child labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2017c). „Safety and health at work“ [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/lang--en/index.htm>. [Accessed 06 February 2018].
- (2018). *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2018. Executive Summary*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (forthcoming). *Technical Report on OSH Knowledge Agencies, Institutions and Organizations*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, IPEC. (2009). *Safe Work for Youth kit*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2011). *Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- (2013). *Ending child labour in domestic work and protecting young workers from abusive working conditions*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- & General Agricultural Workers Union of Ghana, GAWU. (2014). *Eliminating hazardous child labour and Occupational Safety, Health and Environmental risks - A Manual for agents of change in cocoa communities in Ghana*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment, SafeWork; & International Association of Labour Inspection, IALI. (2002). *Combating child labour. A handbook for labour inspectors*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- International Trade Union Confederation, ITUC. (2017). *Our Economic and Political Agenda for Young Workers*.
- Johnson, S.B.; Blum, R.W.; & Giedd, J.N. (2009). „Policy, Adolescent Maturity and the Brain: The Promise and Pitfalls of Neuroscience Research in Adolescent Health“ in *J Adolesc Health*, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 216-221, September 2009.
- Kines, P.; Framke, E.; Salmi, A.; & Bengtson, E. (2013). *Young workers' occupational safety and health risks in the Nordic countries*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers.
- Learning and Skills Council, LSC; & Trade Union Congress, TUC. (2005). *Apprenticeships: A short guide for union safety representatives*. Coventry: LSC.
- O'Higgins, N. (2017). *Rising to the youth employment challenge: New evidence on key policy issues*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Ontario Ministry of Labour. (2016). „Results: New and Young Workers Blitz 2016“ [Online]. Available at: https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/blitzes/blitz_report79.php. [Accessed 06 February 2018].
- Shehu, E.; & Nilsson, B. (2014). *Informal employment among youth: Evidence from 20 school-to-work transition surveys*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Smith, P.; & Breslin, C. (2013). „A Review of the Research on How Work-Based Injury Risks are Distributed Across Youth's jobs in Canada“ in *Health and Safety of Young Workers Proceedings of a U.S. and Canadian Series of Symposia*. NIOSH.
- Tucker, S.; Diekrager, D.; Turner, N.; & Kelloway, E. (2014). „Work-related injury under-reporting among young workers: prevalence, gender differences, and explanations for underreporting“ in *Journal of Safety Research*, vol. 50, pp. 67-73, September 2014.
- United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF. (2013). *The State of the World's Children: Children with Disabilities*. New York: UNICEF.
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, UNDESA . (2015). *Trends in international migrant stock: The 2015 Revision*. New York.

Workers of all ages have the right to safe and healthy work. The 541 million young workers aged 15-24 account for more than 15 per cent of the world's labour force and in certain regions, suffer up to a 40 per cent higher rate of non-fatal occupational injuries than adult workers above the age of 25.

Various risk factors that are specific to young workers increase the likelihood that they will suffer harm from workplace hazards. These risk factors can be inherent to their age (for example, stage of physical, psychosocial and emotional development) or influenced by their age (for example, level of skills, experience, education).

Young workers are often unaware of their rights as employees and of their occupational safety and health (OSH) responsibilities as young employers, and may be particularly reluctant to speak out about OSH risks. The strong presence of young workers in hazardous economic sectors and their exposure to the hazards found in these sectors further increases their risk of sustaining occupational injury and disease.

The ILO has prepared this brief in support of the 2018 World Day for Safety and Health at Work, which aims to promote a safe and healthy generation of workers. The objective of the brief is to clearly illustrate OSH risks faced by young workers and to encourage a global conversation on the need to improve their safety and health. The brief then describes legal, policy and practical steps for improvement.

**Labour Administration, Labour Inspection
and Occupational Safety and Health Branch
(LABADMIN/OSH)**

Governance and Tripartism Department
International Labour Office
Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 799 67 15
Fax: +41 22 799 68 78
Email: labadmin-osh@ilo.org
www.ilo.org/labadmin-osh

