

A photograph of a tea plantation in Rwanda, showing rows of tea bushes in the foreground and rolling hills in the background under a cloudy sky.

KIT FOR MANAGERS

Employing youth

Tips for medium and small tea plantation owners in Rwanda

LET'S PROTECT THEM

Working with Youth

Tips for medium and small tea plantation owners in Rwanda

This booklet is for small tea Plantation owners who employ young workers, especially those 16 to 17 years old. It describes what an employer needs to know when hiring adolescent workers and how to improve the workshop so it is profitable, productive, and safe.

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Disclaimer

The document was prepared following IPEC and ILO guidelines with regards to decent work for young workers. Therefore there are some portions of the documents from the ILO& IPEC guidelines designed to guide such documents at national level. The responsibility for opinions expressed in training needs assessment, studies done to prepare this document and other contributions rests solely with their authors. This material does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

LET'S PROTECT THEM

A MESSAGE TO YOU, THE MANAGER / OWNER...

You play an important role in Rwanda. You create jobs. You contribute to the economy. You provide the goods and services people need. And, you help young workers gain skills that will last a lifetime. Youth of today are your clients of tomorrow.

But youth need to be trained well and protected from work situations that they are not ready for yet. If they are well guided at the start, they will be set for a lifetime of productive work. Whether you have youth doing light work, serving an apprenticeship, or those over the legal working age doing regular work, this booklet will tell you what you need to know.

Most important: The tips in this booklet are not just good for young workers; they are good for business. It has been proven time and time again, that the simple suggestions given here help to transform a business in many ways. Your workshop will not only become a safer and more pleasant place to work, it will actually become more profitable.

The young worker is our future

The commercial world is changing fast. Businesses like yours used to be completely independent; now, even small firms may be part of a worldwide chain of suppliers and manufacturers. Before, no one asked about how products were made; now, consumers are demanding proof that the products they buy are made with good materials under safe working conditions. Before, job experience was enough; now it is crucial for young people to have a basic education and specialized skills in order get decent jobs. There are now new machinery, new products, new markets, and new materials to work with. A business owner must prepare for tomorrow, not for yesterday!

Equipping a young worker for the future will yield rewards many times over. A worker you train yourself knows the business. There is no better way to build loyalty and trust. Invest in the future. Invest in a young worker!

Read through this booklet, and see what makes sense to you. Then set up a plan to make changes in your own workshop step by step. Do a “walk-through” periodically using the checklist at the end.

Outline of the booklet

Section I: General guidelines about young workers

Section II: Specific suggestions for reducing risks in your workplace

Section III: Resources

Section IV: Checklist

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUNG WORKERS

They are good workers!

Young workers are a great asset to your business because they:

- are energetic
- learn fast
- have quick reflexes
- have good eyesight and hearing
- appreciate the chance to learn skills and are anxious to do well
- are enthusiastic with a great work ethic
- are full of new ideas to help your business grow and improve
- adaptable and flexible, often able to work part-time or on weekends or outside school hours when you do not require a full time worker

Because there are many advantages to hiring young workers, you want to use them to the best advantage. Choose tasks which draw on these strengths.

They need attention.

Young workers deserve special consideration because they are:

- still growing and their organs, muscles, and bones are still developing
- more sensitive to certain chemicals, toxic fumes, or noise than adults
- quick to move — sometimes without thinking — and more likely to take risks
- less experienced and need supervision and training
- bored more easily and may let their attention wander

Although generally strong, smart and eager, young workers must be kept away from jobs or parts of the workshop where they will be put at risk. It's a fact: When young workers and adult workers are doing the same tasks, the young workers are more likely to get injured.

They are people ... not just workers!

Consider the young worker as a “whole person”. Pay attention to ...

- whether the young worker has completed compulsory schooling, has a school certificate and has learned to read, write, and do arithmetic well.
- how the young worker behaves and seems to feel: anxious? sad? shy?
- whether the young worker is sufficiently well-fed and clothed.
- what the young worker wants to learn and her/his hopes for the future.

If something is lacking in one of these areas, the employer can often provide or direct the young person to the kind of help that will set him or her on the right track for the future.



WHAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Workplace accidents and illnesses can have tragic consequences for workers and their families. They can also have a very bad impact on your business through temporary or permanent loss of workers, disruption to the work, medical costs, or loss of customers.

In contrast, safe workplaces are more efficient, more productive, have less staff turnover and are a valued part of the community. As an employer it is worth your while to make sure that your workplace is safe for all your workers!

FOUR RULES	
1	<p>Know the legal age for regular work hazardous work. In RWANDA it is 18 years. Though the law allows young workers between 16 and 17years to work but with particular attention. Do not let anyone below 16years of age to work or even “help out”! If you have apprentices or trainees, they must be at least 16 years.</p> <p>Remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>All children have the right to complete the 12 years basic education. Allow them to attend school.</i>• <i>to indulgde children in slavery or similar practices is prohibited.</i>• <i>Trafficking of children is a serious offence as well as turning young workers into debt bondage;</i>• <i>to replace young workers with mature people in forced labour and use them in conflicts and wars is a human right violation crime punishable by the Rwandan law.</i>• <i>Every employer in the agriculture sector as mentioned in Article 6 of the labour law shall request a birth certificate from a worker before signing an employment contract with him/her</i>
2	<p>Give every young worker a work contract. A written and signed contract protects you, the employer, as well as your young employees and helps avoid misunderstandings by making clear the rights and obligations of both.</p>
3	<p>Train and supervise. It is your obligation to teach young workers what they need to know to do the job well, and how to stay safe while doing it.</p>
4	<p>Do not let anyone under 18 do hazardous work. Youth of legal working age can work if the working conditions or the work itself is not dangerous for them.</p>

What is hazardous? According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Recommendation 190,, adopted by Rwanda, it 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**” and includes:

- **work on high structures (roofs, trees, walls) or on equipment where they might fall (ladders, scaffolding, steep slopes)**
- **work under ground (caves, tunnels, pits)**
- **work in or under water (diving, standing in water or on damp ground for more than a few minutes)**
- **work in small spaces (tunnels, boxes, refrigerators)**
- **work alone away from others, or isolated from other young people**
- **lifting heavy items or carrying loads for long distances**
- **operating or working close to heavy or dangerous machinery, such as**
 - **equipment that cuts or crushes**
 - **equipment that is motorized or powered by an engine**
 - **machines that can trap the hand, foot, hair or a garment**
- **work for long hours or at night**
- **work with toxic chemicals or work close to where they are being used**
- **work in places where there is risk of attack going to and from work**
- **work demanding heavy responsibility for others’ safety or goods**

There are many tasks that young workers can do and can do well. The challenge is to know where to draw the line. This booklet will help you do this in ways that make good business sense.

Young workers here mostly refer to 16-17 years old under Rwandan law. They are legally old enough if not hazardous and meets safe conditions.

GENERAL TIPS

If you have read this far, it shows you are a concerned person who wants to have a legal and safe workplace that anyone will recognize right away as a good place for young people to work. This reputation will help you attract and keep customers. It will help you make your business grow and be more competitive through increasing productivity, improving quality, and reducing accidents. The ideas and solutions provided in this booklet do not come out of thin air. They have been developed and tested time and time again with thousands of workshops like yours.

TIPS Assign every young worker to a supervisor

Young workers need guidance, especially at the beginning. Most injuries occur when there is no one paying attention to them. Make sure the supervisor who assigns the work knows the tasks that young workers should not be allowed to do and takes responsibility for them!

TIPS Show ... don't just tell

Young workers learn by seeing and doing. They need to be surrounded by examples of good work practices. If they see people they respect acting safely and responsibly, they will do the same. Supervisors, above all, must set a good example. A good way to build good work habits is to take young workers on a walk-through inspection of the workshop to spot hazards and unsafe practices. Young workers are sometimes shy. Encourage them to ask questions and to let you know if there's a problem or directions are unclear. Observe them while they work and correct any mistakes. Check periodically. Retrain regularly.

TIPS Do not assume that young workers "know the ropes"

Young workers may look like adults on the outside but on the inside, both physically and emotionally, they are not yet fully mature. They have a tendency to be impatient or to take risks. They may jump too quickly into tasks that require careful critical thinking. They want to please and do not want to appear stupid. As a result they may take on tasks they do not really know how to do, or let other workers talk them into doing things they have not yet been trained for. Give them clear instructions for each task, especially unfamiliar ones.

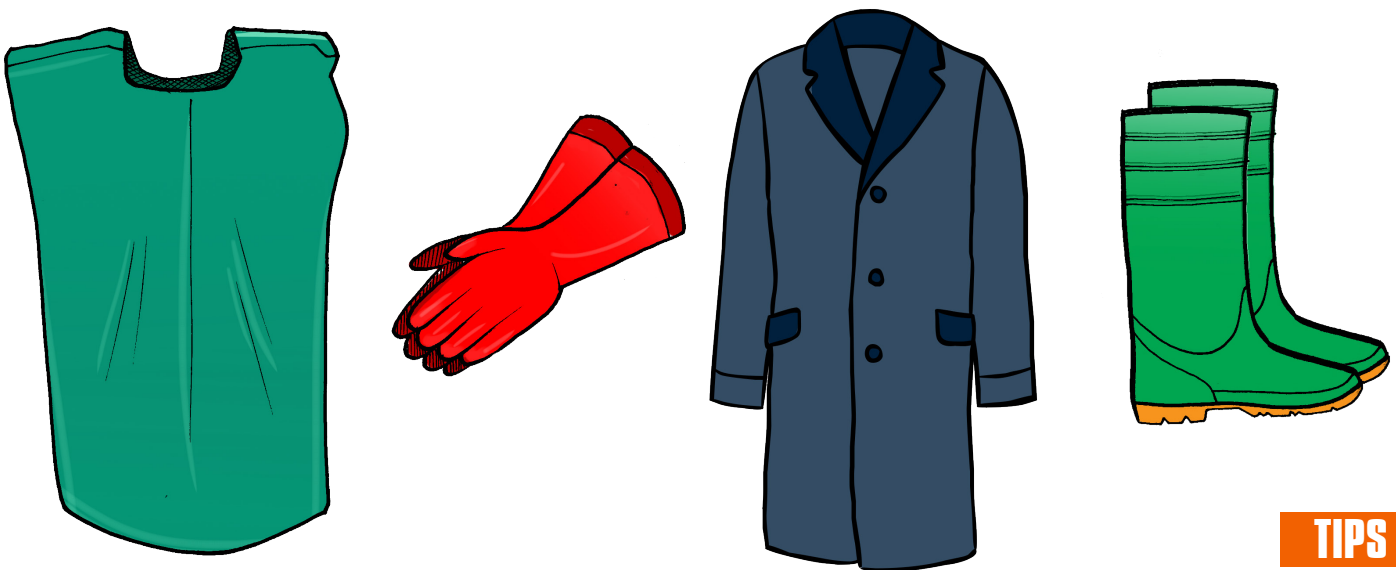
Do not rely on personal protective equipment (PPE)

TIPS

If a task is so hazardous that adult workers need to use equipment such as respirators or goggles, this is a sign that it is too risky for young workers to do or even to work alongside. An exception is an apprenticeship or program where the young worker is being formally trained on a particular task or piece of equipment and is being closely supervised. In this case, be absolutely sure that the PPE fits the young workers and that they know how and when to use it.

PPE does not make a hazardous task safe but when combined with certain training it can make the job safer. However the country may decide it is too hazardous and not allow young workers to deal with some chemicals like pesticides. On the other hand in some jobs like bee keeping - it is safe if they wear the suits and learn the techniques.

Therefore an employer should ensure that young workers have – and use – basic protective garments as needed (for example, hats to protect from sun, gloves to protect from sharp objects, shoes to protect from cuts or falling objects).



TIPS

Set up a safety and health programme

Make sure you know the hazards and risks of all jobs and work areas in your workshop. Involve every worker in developing the program, including young workers. Don't just focus on the physical environment.

Identify all situations that can lead to fatigue, stress, or harassment. See that the first aid box, fire extinguishers, and other emergency devices are ready to use and that young workers know where they are and what to do. Prepare them for all kinds of emergency: accidents, fires, violent situations, etc. Show them escape routes and explain where to go if they need medical treatment. Demonstrate the safety precautions to take for each task.

LET'S PROTECT THEM

WORK CONTRACTS

- Do sign a written contract with young workers and make sure they clearly understand its terms
- Do give them annual leave, sick leave, and maternity leave
- Do follow proper procedures if the contract needs to be terminated

In order to avoid misunderstanding between the employer and the young employees, the contract must be clear and explicitly outline the rights and obligations of both. A contract can be for an undefined period, for a specified time, or for a specific task.

In Rwanda according to **the Labour Law No.13 of 27th May 2009**, each employee should have a contract. The following are the main provisions of the contract as per the above mentioned law.

The contract should include these ten points

1° legal basis;

2° complete identity of the employee and employer and the place of work;

3° nature and duration of the contract;

4° nature of the job;

5° probation period;

6° notice period;

7° salary, allowances and deductions, date and place of payment;

8° rate of Over time remuneration;

9° labour collective conventions;

10° Internal rules and regulations

Never rely on a verbal agreement. It is easy to forget what you have said and “agreed to”. A written contract reduces conflicts and disputes at the work place. It ensures the rights and obligations of young workers. Ignoring it may consume a lot of time to settle the dispute ... reducing production, reducing profits.

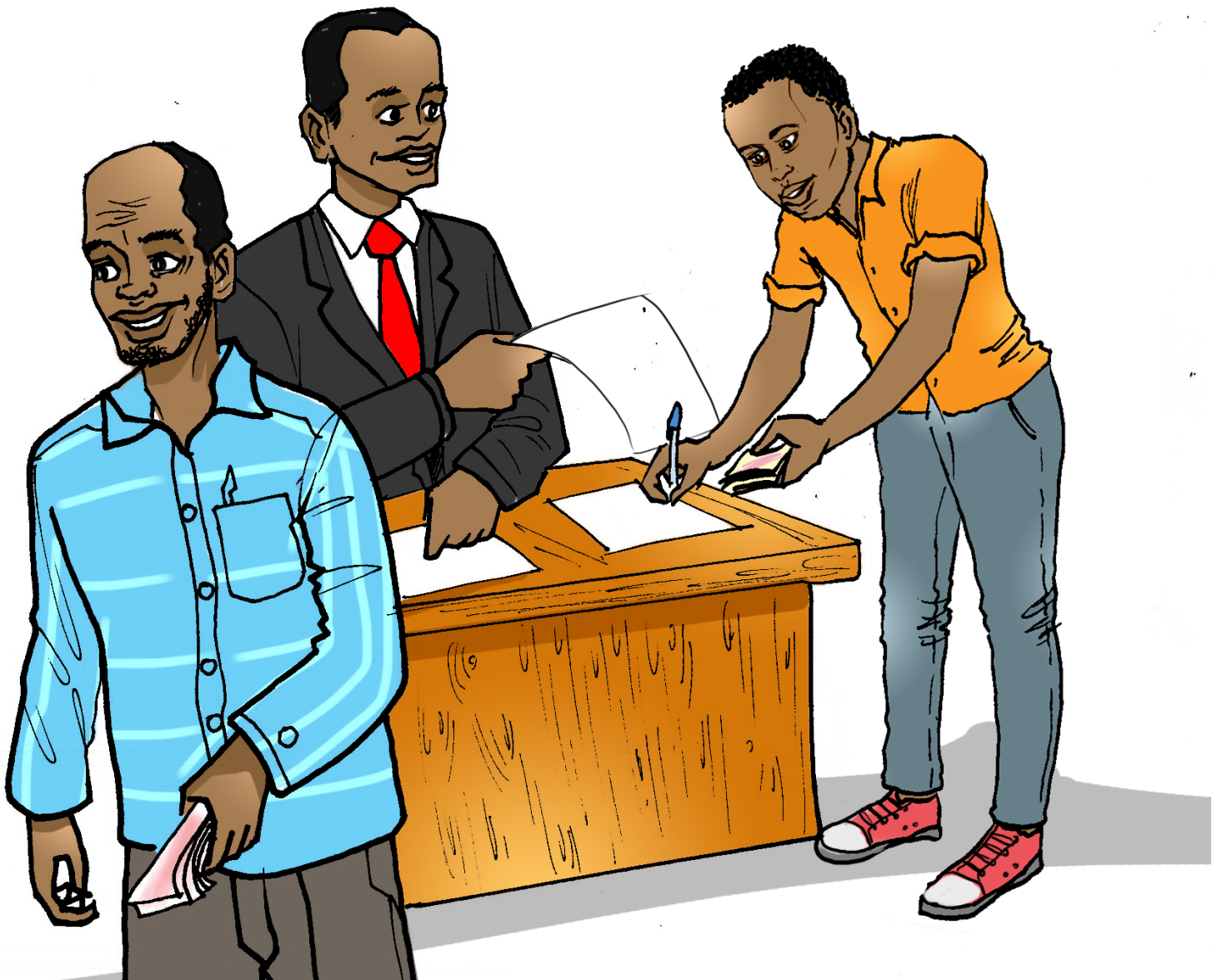
TIPS**Inform young workers of their benefits and obligations at the start**

Young workers have rights. They are eligible for benefits that other workers get, such as paid vacation, sick leave, insurance, medical care, etc. Make sure that all young workers know this and know the procedures for claiming them. At the same time, make sure they know exactly what they or their families are expected to pay for, if anything.

Young workers or their families should NOT be made to pay for supplies, protective clothing or equipment — that is the employer's responsibility. Certain projects or cooperatives might be able to support some of the gear?

TIPS**Pay young workers promptly**

When young workers are paid on time, it contributes to a positive atmosphere in the workshop. It will enhance production as no time will be wasted in following up the salary and other allowances. It will help maintain a smooth relationship between employer and employee.



TIMES & HOURS

- **Do make sure young workers do not work overtime**
- **Do give workers rest breaks**
- **Don't let young workers work at night or travel home after dark**

Every business wants to meet its deadlines. But making people work overtime, work before dawn or long hours will reduce product quality and increase the number of mistakes and injuries. Mistakes and injuries cost you money and cause delays! Although many young workers are more than willing to sign up for extra work in the hope of getting overtime pay, do not be tempted to keep them on. Long hours can make even the simplest work hazardous.

Watch that young workers do not work more than 8 hours in 24

TIPS

Young people require more sleep than adults. It is now widely recognized that 16 to 18 year olds may actually need as much or more sleep than younger children.

Though Rwanda does not have a law that limits the hours and the times of day young workers can work, Knowing that adults works between 40 to 45hours per week, young workers should not work beyond 35 hours per week.They are also sometimes allowed more generous rest periods than other workers and are not typically allowed to work nights.Some young women may be breastfeeding a baby and need time and a place during the day to do this.

In Rwanda the following provisions are to be noted

- *There is no national minimum wage; daily minimum wage is Rwf100 as stipulated in a 1973 law. In practice, workers get much higher wage. The salary applicable to each professional category is determined under a collective labor convention.*
- *Wages must be paid regularly and in legal tender (Rwandan franc). Wage interval must not exceed:
 - one day for a worker hired on hourly or daily basis;
 - a week or fortnight for a worker hired on weekly or fortnightly basis; and
 - a month for a worker hired on monthly basis.*
- *There is no provision for compensatory rest day when a worker works on a weekly rest day however he is entitled to premium wage rate.*
- *There is a provision for premium pay for working on weekly rest day and public holidays. Wage rate for working on a weekly rest day or public holiday is 200% of the normal wage rate.*

Working at night poses additional safety risks, particularly for girls. As an employer, your moral responsibility for your workers does not end at the door of the workshop. You need to make sure that young workers can reach home safely after work.

TIPS Count up the total hours your young employees are actually working

Many young workers – especially girls – often have a second “job” at home in the form of domestic tasks such as child care, cooking, hauling water and wood, running errands. They may also be going to school. These additional pressures combine to make young workers tired, which places them at increased risk for mistakes, injuries and illnesses. Worker fatigue, in turn, may harm the productivity of your business. Make sure that young workers, like everyone, have some time to relax and time to spend outside of work.



HARASSMENT & VIOLENCE

- **Do write a policy about harassment and violence in your workshop**
- **Do model good behaviors yourself**
- **Do address harassment or violence immediately if it occurs**

Young workers work better when they enjoy their work and have good relations with their co-workers and supervisors. They perform better when they are treated in a respectful way. A respectful environment is free from harassment and violence.

Harassment is an act or comment imposed on someone who is not in a position to complain. It can slow down production, lead to high employee turnover, create a bad reputation in the community, and cause a downturn in business. In the past, some employers thought it was normal to slap or shout at young workers to “keep them in line.” Now we know that violence is not an effective way to discipline employees. No form of harassment or violence is acceptable in the workplace!

For the individual concerned, harassment can result in extreme suffering — both physical and psychological. The physical problems can take many forms including headaches, sleep problems, and stomach disorders. On the psychological side, it can make a young person depressed, lose motivation, and in extreme cases, take his own life.

Do not ignore any sign of sexual harassment

TIPS

Sexual harassment includes:

- unwelcome touching or patting
- staring or leering
- suggestive remarks or lewd comments
- sexually suggestive wall posters or calendars
- hints, requests or demands for sexual favours
- rape

Rwandan Society recognizes that sexual harassment is unacceptable, but it is still far too common and the effects are serious. A young person can bear the scars of sexual abuse for a lifetime. Even when there has been no physical contact, there can be psychological damage in the form of shame or guilt although the young person was not the one at fault. Religious sensitivities can be particularly strong on this matter. It can have a devastating effect on a young person’s whole life when an unwanted pregnancy or a sexually transmitted disease such as an HIV infection results.

The business also suffers. Co-workers may act as if they 'don't see' but they do notice and may well be afraid, concerned, or less productive as a result. If they talk about it at lunch or after work with family and friends, this will have an impact on your business reputation, as well as their respect for you as an employer.

Most of the time the harasser is in a more powerful position than the one being harassed. Supervisors or others in authority think they can get sexual favors from young workers by using threats and intimidation. Young girl workers are at special risk of sexual harassment and abuse, but boys are by no means spared and anyone can harass another.

TIPS Warn workers that all forms of harassment are unacceptable

When we think of violence we think of blows, cuffs, and slaps. But there is also verbal violence and more subtle kinds of attack. For example:

- damage to personal belongings
- gossiping and inducing colleagues to be against the person
- humiliation, insulting, name-calling and ridicule
- shouting and swearing
- isolation and shunning
- intrusion into private life
- threats and intimidation

You may not think non-physical harassment is serious but it is. It can end up in physical violence. It can – and almost always does – seriously damage the morale of the workforce



Identify young workers who are most vulnerable to harassment or violence

TIPS

Whatever the type of harassment or violence, the situation or the cause, it is up to you to stop it, or better yet, prevent it from happening in the first place. Here are steps that will help prevent harassment:

- Identify the young workers whose sex, race, ethnic background, age, or religion makes them appear different from the others and who may be at extra risk.
- Talk to young workers periodically to make sure that they are not facing problems.
- Keep an eye on them to detect changes in their behavior, mood and motivation.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting throughout the work areas and that none are working alone away from others.

Develop a written policy

TIPS

Having a policy on violence at work sends a strong message that harassment of any kind is not being tolerated. The policy should also be posted in work places. A written policy brings the issue into the open, allowing discussion and lets everyone know what to expect. Most small workshops do not work on the basis of formal policies. However, because harassment, especially sexual harassment, is often hidden and considered shameful, it may continue for a long time and damage business performance unless people know that it will be punished. A written policy gives them confidence to act against it. You must be sure that whatever is written in the policy is something you are willing and able to enforce, no matter whom is discovered to be the harasser – even your best friend or your son or daughter.

The policy should include the following points

1. a clear definition of harassment and violence, especially sexual harassment
2. the complaint procedures
3. the disciplinary measures
4. a guarantee that all complaints will be treated confidentially and someone who complains about harassment or violence will not suffer as a result

The last point is especially important for young workers who may otherwise be afraid of reporting abuses for fear of further harassment or losing their jobs. Investigations into complaints of harassment and violence must be fair and independent as the accusations may be false and serious damage can be done.

The complaint procedures should be realistic and not too complex. Complaints can often be handled informally. Sometimes it helps if someone is designated as a focal point for complaints to whom the workers can talk and get resolution of the problem. It is very important to minimize gossip and blame. Make sure all employees know the policy and display it prominently.

TIPS

Don't hesitate when an incident occurs

Harassment is usually not a one-time occurrence. It is usually repeated and it gets worse and more entrenched each time it is repeated. An employer who fails to take action at the first sign of harassment sends a message that the behavior is acceptable. If an incident of harassment or violence does occur in your workplace, respond immediately.

The first action to take is to be sympathetic and supportive of the victim.

The second step is to enforce the disciplinary measures written in the policy. If you do not do this, the policy will have no meaning and all the work you have done is of little value; people will not heed the policy. It will be only words on paper. Depending on the seriousness of the harassment, assess whether it is sufficient to reduce the contacts between the victim and the harasser or whether the harasser will need to be fired. If possible, give them a second chance while still taking action to discipline them. Follow up regularly to ensure that the harassment has stopped.

Eliminating chances for harassment or violence to occur in your workplace is not only ethically and morally right but it also makes good business sense. Harassment has a bad effect on teamwork. All in all, it costs you money, destroys creativity, and erodes employee morale. The bottom line is that harassment and violence can ruin your business.

In summary: **The five guiding principles for creating a respectful work environment** are:

1. Be vigilant for any type of workplace harassment and violence
2. Keep an eye on those most vulnerable to it.
3. Establish a policy to prevent and address harassment problems.
4. Post the policy where it can be easily seen and sensitize all the workers.
5. Show that you take the policy seriously. Model good behavior yourself and take action at the first sign of violence or harassment.

STRESS

- **Do identify what may be causing stress in your workshop**
- **Do reduce stress by systematically addressing the problems that feed it**
- **Don't allow a work environment that young workers fear**

Young workers are often under greater stress at work than people realize. They are learning new skills. They are trying to get the work done on time. And they are struggling to meet the employer's expectations in terms of quality. In short, they are trying to prove themselves.

If you add to that other types of stress, such as long working hours with few rest breaks plus pressures from family or domestic chores, the young person rapidly becomes overloaded. Add to this, hassles from other workers or even a tense, fearful atmosphere at work, and the situation becomes overwhelming.

Give young workers some measure of control

TIPS

By virtue of their age and inexperience, young workers are usually given little say or control over their work situation. They may have no access to their earnings, no privacy, no choice about whether they or not they work or what type of work to do. Knowing this, a wise employer will do simple things to give the young worker some sense of control over her/his work and life, for example, where to sit, which adult worker to work with, or what time to take a rest break.

Treat stress as a serious issue

TIPS

High levels of work-related stress are not just unpleasant, they can cause illness, accidents, and violence. Because stress interferes with sleep, it compounds the effect of other factors such as inadequate food, fast paced work, exposure to germs, and many others. Remember, even though the physical work may not be dangerous, a work situation that causes great levels of stress among young workers is to be considered "hazardous work" in the legal sense.

The causes of stress among young workers have their roots in many areas and cannot be reduced by a single action. In fact, all of the hazards and risks discussed in this booklet contribute to stress levels in some fashion, particularly if they are ignored by the employer.

One factor that is frequently forgotten is that, all too often, young people are carrying a heavy burden of family responsibilities. They may already be supporting a spouse and children. In an AIDS-affected household, they may be the sole support for an unknown number of relatives. As a result, they may feel desperate to keep the job and will agree to almost any terms or conditions, often at great risk to their own health and future.

TIPS A partner can ease entry and training

One technique that has been used by others to reduce stress in the workplace is to assign each new young worker a “buddy” or mentor. Sometimes this is a more experienced young worker. This mentor answers questions – particularly the simple ones that a young worker may be too embarrassed to ask of the boss, helps with the hands-on training and especially the practice of new skills, and offers safety tips.

The atmosphere or mood in a workshop profoundly influences the productivity of young workers. Creating a positive workplace climate by making small improvements in many areas can help to create a better, more efficient and competitive business.



MATERIALS STORAGE & HANDLING

- **Do make sure storage shelves are the right height for young workers**
- **Do not let young workers use mechanical lifting equipment**
- **Do train young workers not to lift heavy material above shoulder level**

Improving the ways materials and equipment are stored and moved about can reduce the risk to young workers, increase productivity and improve the quality of products. These tips are generally low-cost and can dramatically improve the “look” of your workshop.

If in doubt, take it out

Leaving waste or unused materials, stock or equipment around creates safety hazards and reduces the space available for production. The more cluttered your shop floor is, the more likely it is that tools and materials will be lost and accidents will occur. Workers spend valuable time looking for things. It sounds simple, but many businesses like yours have found that just improving housekeeping in the workshop has dramatically improved their productivity.

TIPS

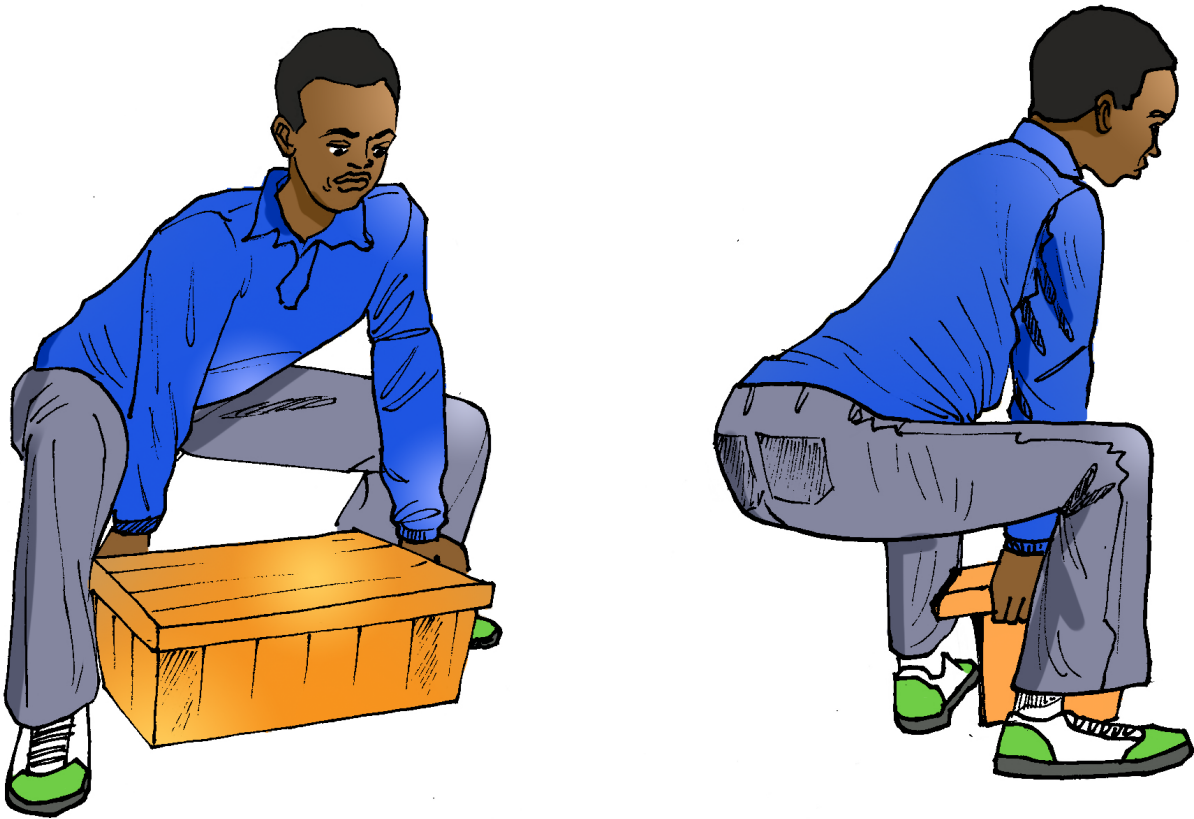
Young workers need to be trained on good housekeeping procedures as soon as they are hired so that it becomes a habit. Tell them to look at each tool, each piece of raw material, each component or spare part and ask themselves: Is it in use? Is it really needed? If the answer is “no”, then take it away.

TIPS

Avoid putting things on the floor

But where do you put tools and materials that are not being used? The first rule is NOT to put them on the floor. They take up space. But they can also create an obstacle course, as workers try to walk around and over them, reducing efficiency. Or worse, things on the floor lead to injuries when workers trip over them. They are a hazard to young workers.

Owners of small workshops often complain about the lack of storage space. When you add together all of the wall and ceiling area, it is many times greater than the floor space ... use it! By building simple shelves, multi-level racks, or pallets you can make maximum use of the walls and you can even make use of the ceiling area for light objects by using pulleys and hangers. To avoid low back pain, falls, or injuries from falling objects, provide steps-tools and design the racks so that young workers can use them with ease.



Here are the guidelines:

- The height of the lowest level rack for heavy material should not be lower than workers' knees.
- Heavy materials should not be placed any higher than the workers' shoulders.

TIPS Make lifting more efficient and safer

A heavy load suspended in the air is always dangerous, especially in a small, crowded workshop. Use floor-based lifting devices that raise objects only the minimum necessary to move them. Avoid overhead cranes and hoists as they can result in serious accidents. **Young workers should not be allowed to operate heavy lifting equipment.**

Young workers can injure themselves through repeated lifting or by trying to lift heavy items all by themselves. They are still growing and bones or joints can be permanently injured by too much strain. The solution is to divide heavy items into smaller loads, or for 2 or 3 young people to work together to lift solid items. Although it depends somewhat on the size and strength of the worker, it is generally more efficient to lift more objects weighing less than 20 kg, than fewer objects weighing more.

WORKSHOP DESIGN

- **Do provide footrests and platforms for young workers who are short**
- **Do give young workers a chance to move around and change position**
- **Do use the “elbow rule” to determine the correct hand height when working**

To do his/her best, a young worker must have a well-designed workstation. They usually do the same tasks over and over. If they can do so quickly and easily, productivity will be higher and quality will be better. It is important to design the workstation with both workers and tasks in mind so that work is done smoothly. This is particularly important if there is a mix of young workers — particularly girls — and adult workers of different sizes and strengths.

The two tips below can help you raise productivity through better workstation design. In each case, you should be able to design improvements in your own workshop using observation and common sense. The cost of such improvements is usually very low; the benefits are often important.

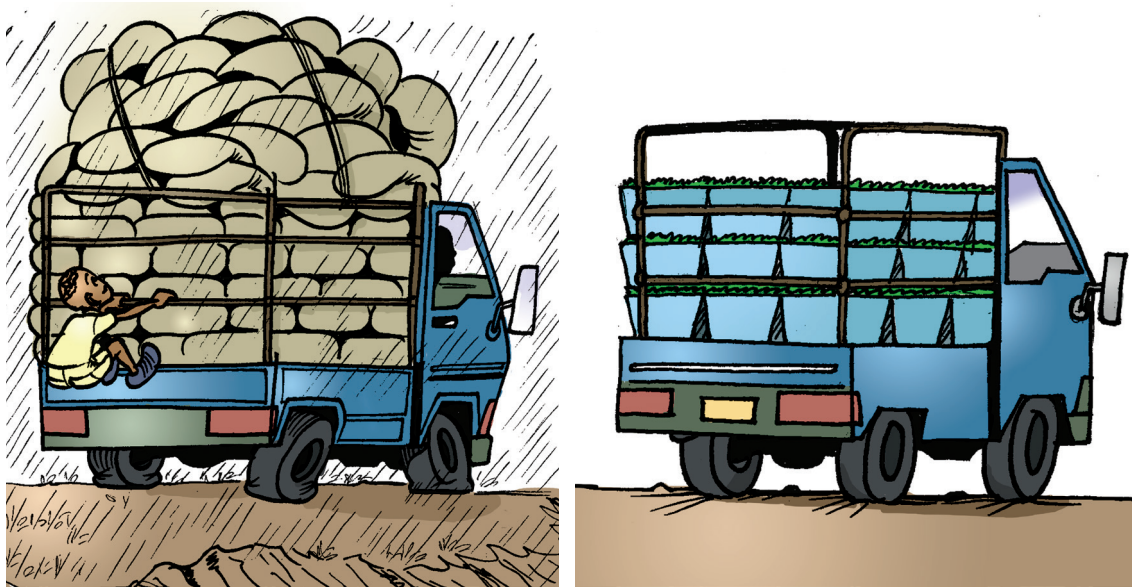
Keep materials, tools and controls within arm’s length

TIPS

Time and effort are saved by placing materials, tools, and controls (such as switches and levers) within easy reach of the worker. Long reaches mean a loss of production time and extra effort. The rule is to keep all objects the worker will use within the area that s/he can reach easily without leaning forward or stretching. This area is quite small especially for young workers.

When young people are working in an awkward position, they take longer to do the work and they get tired more quickly. For example, shoulder muscles tire rapidly when the person has to reach and lift. The back is strained when the body must bend forward or twist. The longer someone tries to work in an awkward position, the longer the operation will take, and the more likely it is that there will be accidents. Try the following ideas to improve work positions:

- Provide a strong and stable work surface on which work items can be firmly placed
- Place tools and controls so they can be reached without reaching, bending or twisting the body?
- Put a platform under the chair or feet of short workers
- Provide seating that is the right height and has a sturdy backrest
- Provide enough space for the worker to move legs around easily



Although it is common in many workshops for young workers to squat, kneel or sit cross-legged to work, they get tired more quickly than if they have a chair. Providing a simple stool and table set-up is a cheap way to fight fatigue in most industries. Remember, that if young workers are working in one spot for hours (e.g. weaving), then make sure they take regular rest breaks to get up and move around.

The height of the work surface is also important. According to the “elbow rule”, the correct hand height for working is when the lower arm is at right angles to the upper arm, in other words, when the hand is level with the elbow. For standing work, the hand height may be a little lower than elbow level and when very strong force is needed, a bit lower still so as to use the weight of the body. The height of the work surface or seat should be adjusted to the size of each worker. Adjustments can be made by placing wooden platforms or stands under tables, work surfaces or work items. Platforms are particularly useful for young workers who tend to be shorter than adults.

MACHINES & TOOLS

- **Do mark which machines are hazardous and young workers should not use**
- **Do give young workers hand tools that are sized to fit them**
- **Do train young workers to use machines and tools safely**

Even hand and small power tools can cause work stoppages and severe injuries when used or maintained improperly. Competitive workshops cannot afford these delays which can seriously affect output and delivery schedules. But there are several simple measures that you can take to avoid machine breakdown or shutdown due to an accident.

Give your machines a productivity and safety check every 3 months

TIPS

Walk through your workshop and check out the following:

- Are there any delays or bottlenecks caused by specific machines?
- Are there any machines or processes that workers fear or hesitate to use?
- Have any machine guards been altered, removed, or broken?
- Is personal protective equipment not being worn consistently?
- Are young workers operating power equipment or other hazardous machines?

Young workers should not operate or work near machines (within 3 meters) where the risks of injury are great. These include:

- rotating shafts, wheels, rollers, pulleys, and gears that can catch clothing, skin, or hair and literally pull the worker into the machine
- machines where one part rolls against another, creating a “nip point” in which hands or clothing can be caught
- power machines with a back and forth movement (for example, a power loom) that may catch a worker unaware cutting and punching, shearing, and bending operations

Safe machines are less expensive in the long run

When you buy a new machine, check that it has been constructed safely. Dangerous parts should be situated in a position where they cannot harm the worker. Take special care when buying second hand machinery, as guards may have been dismantled or not included.

You can save yourself a lot of trouble and expense by choosing machines that are constructed in such a way that it is not necessary to add extra protection. In addition, workers will operate more quickly and efficiently if they are not afraid of being injured by a machine. Cost out for yourself the short and long-term benefits of buying a more expensive but safer and better built machine. Often you will save money in the long-term.

Regularly check hand tools for wear; see that your workers are using them right

Hand tools include anything from sewing needles to machetes. They are most productive when in good condition (e.g. sharp in the case of cutting tools), the right size for the worker, and used properly. The greatest hazards posed by hand tools result from misuse, lack of training, and improper maintenance.

If the tools are designed for adults when you also employ young workers, productivity will go down and the risk of accidents will go up. Tools that are too big and heavy will be tiring and cause mistakes. Comfortable and well-designed handles can make a big difference. For example, better scissor handles are a low-cost improvement in garment factories. Good handles should be non-slip and covered with a soft cushioning material.

Ensure the safe condition and proper use of power tools

Power tools come in many varieties and sizes. They can also be expensive. To ensure that your investment lasts and your tools are as productive as possible, you or someone you designate should train workers to observe the following general precautions:

- Never carry a power tool by the cord or hose
- Never yank the cord or the hose to disconnect it from the electrical outlet
- Keep power extension cords out of passageways, unless they are taped securely to the floor to avoid a tripping hazard
- Extension cords should always be grounded (earthed)
- Don't plug too many extensions into one power supply
- Keep cords and hoses away from heat, oil, and sharp edges
- Disconnect power tools when not using them, before servicing and cleaning them, and when changing accessories such as blades, bits, and cutters
- Keep all people not involved with the work at a safe distance from the work area

- Maintain tools with care; keep them sharp and clean for best performance
- Follow instructions in the user's manual for lubricating and changing accessories
- Wear proper apparel. Loose clothing or jewelry can be caught in moving parts
- Do not stand in water, on damp floors, or in the rain when working with electrical tools – keep hands and electric tools dry
- Do not let young workers work on electrical wires; they require protective gear



HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

- **Do train young workers on risks associated with cleaning**
- **Do label containers of hazardous substances**
- **Don't allow young workers to mix, handle, or use hazardous chemicals**

A polluted working environment reduces efficiency and production. When there are dusts, fumes or smoke in the air, or when oil, paint, and other materials are being sprayed, they interfere with efficient production, require extra inspection and cleaning operations, and may spoil materials or final products. Young workers should not mix, handle, or use hazardous chemicals. They are more easily affected than adults because their brains and organ systems are still developing and they may not realize the risks to their health because the effects may not be immediate.

Label all containers of hazardous chemicals and store them in one place

Because chemicals are expensive, it makes business sense to reduce economic losses due to their inefficient storage, handling, use and/or disposal. Make sure that you have a chemical safety data sheet for each chemical that you use or produce, and that you and your workers, particularly young workers, understand the data sheets. These sheets provide information about the chemical, such as its proper use and precautions. For instance, can it cause fire or explosion? Can it be absorbed through the skin? Is it dangerous for young women who are or might become pregnant? They also explain whether protective equipment is required and what emergency measures to take in the event of a chemical spill or explosion. Remember, if the chemical safety data sheet says the material is hazardous, limit or prohibit its use by younger workers. Chemical safety data sheets are usually easy to obtain from the manufacturer or retailer of chemicals. Purchase hazardous materials only from suppliers that provide data sheets in a language you and your workers understand. Or, if this is not possible, several resources provide data sheets for many chemicals free of charge. If you have access to the Internet, see: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/cis/products/icsc/index.htm>.

Replace a dangerous substance with one that is safer

Organic solvents are widely used in industry to dissolve greases, oil, paint, glue, and similar substances. They are also used for cleaning and degreasing machinery and metal surfaces. Some common names are thinner, white spirit, naphtha, xylene, toluene, trichloroethylene, and acetone.

Many organic solvents are highly flammable and can explode. They can cause dermatitis (an inflammation of the skin) after repeated skin contact, they may be absorbed into the body through the skin or lungs, and they are associated with a variety of health problems. High short term exposure may cause headaches, blurred vision, or even death.

Long-term daily exposure to relatively low concentrations may result in nerve damage or cancer. There should be no skin contact with organic solvents.

Many workshops use organic solvents for cleaning and degreasing metal and other materials. These materials are dangerous and expensive. It may be possible to replace organic solvents with less dangerous substances. For example in cleaning, oil and grease can usually be removed with a soap-based cleaning solution. A 5-10 percent solution of soap will normally be less expensive and safer than an organic solvent.

More complete degreasing can be achieved by using an alkaline substance such as caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) or calcium hydroxide. A solution using one of these substances will normally degrease metal surfaces sufficiently to allow paint to be applied without problems. To avoid rust, cleaned products should be dried properly and each unit should be stored separately.

Cleaning and degreasing with soap and alkalis is often less dangerous and less expensive than cleaning with organic solvents. Less ventilation is needed (except when alkalis are heated). Respirators are not generally needed, though goggles and gloves should be used with alkalis and young workers should not handle them.

All workers, and especially young and female workers, should be protected against exposure to organic solvents.

Cover and label

Always put a lid on containers of hazardous chemicals. A lid saves you money by reducing evaporation, leaks, or spills. Lids also keep dangerous vapours from organic solvents, paint, or glue from escaping and contaminating the air. Also, make a policy that all containers with chemicals in them, no matter how small, should be labeled. It is dangerous and wasteful to have unlabeled containers in your workplace.

Isolating the process away from young workers outside in a shed or under a canopy or in a specially equipped room can reduce some risks.

Pay special attention in these areas to proper ventilation and other controls to minimize exposures to a few adult workers who, if necessary, can be given special protection. However, avoid assigning young workers to these areas.

If you can see dust in the air, it is already too much

However, some hazardous dusts can be “too high” even when you cannot see them. Dust comes from grinding, sawing, mixing, packing, spinning, and other kinds of manufacturing. Dust from vegetable and animal sources can be a major threat to young workers’ health and those containing crystalline silica (e.g., rock, brick, and concrete dust) are especially dangerous. Dust increases wear and tear on machinery too, which then requires more maintenance. It may reduce the quality of raw materials and finished products. Excessive dusts can be a fire hazard and a slip hazard.

Some dust sources are:

- Organic: cotton, coffee, tea, sugar and sugarcane, grain, hair, feathers, bone meal, and wood.
- Mineral: ore, coal, sand, concrete, ceramics, bricks, rocks, and gravel normally contain crystalline silica (whenever you grind, cut, drill, chip or polish stone, concrete, or brick there is risk of silica dust). Other dangerous types of mineral dust are asbestos and metal dusts, such as lead, chromium, copper, cadmium, manganese, and mercury (exposure can come through smoke from furnaces or fumes from welding and soldering, from grinding metal, repairing radiators, and disturbing paint with metal-based pigments).

Dust entering the mouth and nose can be absorbed into the body and damage the workers’ lungs or other parts of the body over time. This is particularly important for young workers who may be exposed to dusts for longer periods of time than adults because they start work at an early age.

Many employers assign young workers to do the cleaning up, thinking this is a safe task that requires little experience or training. But sweeping up dry dust or blowing it off workbenches and equipment with compressed air can be dangerous because small particles can be inhaled deeply into the lungs and remain in the air most of the working day. A better way to clean up is to moisten the dust first and then sweep.

Large particles of dust can be vacuumed up. However, when the dust contains extremely small hazardous particles such as silica or lead, you need to use a special vacuum with a “HEPA filter” – a regular vacuum filter is not sufficient to trap the small particles, and in fact will make them airborne and dangerous to breathe. In this case, if you do not have a HEPA filter vacuum, then wet-sweeping is the safer option.

Provide a place for washing and changing so workers do not take dangerous substances home

There have been cases of young workers being poisoned because their fingers or food have become contaminated by toxic substances in the workshop. The best protection is washing their hands before eating, keeping their food in a place separate from the workshop, and eating in a separate place that is clean. It is up to the employer to make sure they have these facilities.

It is also a good idea for all workers, including young ones, to get in the habit of showering and changing clothes before going home so that family members are not exposed to any bits of toxic material on their hair or work clothes.

One of the most common and most serious “take-home” hazards is lead dust. It especially affects the unborn (when women are exposed to lead) and young children. Family members may be directly exposed to lead when some types of work are done in or around the home or dust is carried home from the workshop on the worker’s clothing, exposing the entire family.



Prepare for emergencies

When hazardous substances are used, there is always a risk that an accident will occur. A chemical might spill, or a worker might get splashed. Plan for such events even if they have never happened before.

Place warning signs in the areas where hazardous substances are used.

If chemicals are used, it is wise to have an eyewash station close by.

If you cannot afford an eye wash fountain, you can provide plastic squeeze bottles filled with pure water for workers to wash their eyes with.

Set up a program to routinely check that the eyewash station (or other type of system) is clean and works, otherwise it may not be ready when needed. Show young workers what to do if an emergency happens.



LIGHT, NOISE, TEMPERATURE

- **Do test young workers' eyesight**
- **Do keep noise levels down**
- **Do make sure young workers are warm (or cool) enough**

Some owners hire young workers because their eyesight is better. But even young workers must have good lighting for detailed work and general safety. Bad lighting leads to low productivity and poor quality work ... as well as eye strain, fatigue and headaches for the worker. Numerous studies show that better lighting pays off: it can increase productivity as much as 10 per cent and reduce errors by 30 per cent.

Notice the distance between young workers' face and their work

A clue that the light in the workshop is too dim and that young workers are straining their eyes is when they hunch over their work, holding it close to their face, or squinting. It may also be a sign that their vision needs to be checked. If you suspect that this is the problem, then encourage them to have an eyesight test; you can help them pay for it by giving them paid time off to visit the doctor.

Ask your young workers from time to time whether they have enough light to see well and improve the situation if necessary. Better light does not mean buying more light bulbs.

There are four ways to improve lighting

1. increase natural light with high windows and skylights
2. improve the way lighting and work is arranged
3. paint walls and ceilings a light color
4. keep light sources clean

Natural light is the best and cheapest source of light, but small workshops seldom make full use of it. The higher the window, the more light it gives (low windows tend to get blocked by machines or materials). Skylights can give twice the light of a low window. If skylights are not practical, translucent plastic panels in the roof are a low-cost substitute.

Unless you have lots of skylights, you are likely to have shadows and unequally-distributed light. Detailed, precision work should be done close to the windows or the work stations grouped together and additional direct lighting provided in that spot.

Light-colored paint or whitewash on the ceiling, walls and equipment can cut lighting bills by one-quarter. It also helps make a pleasant, cheerful work environment and encourages cleanliness and good housekeeping. In order to spread reflected light evenly throughout the interior, ceilings should be as near white as possible. For the walls, pale colors are better than flat white, although whitewash is OK too. Machines, work-benches and desk-tops should normally be slightly darker and of a different color than walls and floors so they can be seen easily.

Eliminate glare

“Glare” is a bright point of light that is visible either directly or out of the corner of a person’s eye when s/he is working. It can come either from a lamp or a window. Glare causes discomfort, irritation, and eye fatigue and therefore reduces worker productivity. To reduce glare,

- put covers over light bulbs and fluorescent tubes. Make sure there are no naked bulbs in young workers’ field of vision
- cover windows with translucent blinds, curtains, or shades when the sun shines in
- plant trees or vines outside the windows
- change the windows from transparent to translucent glass or plastic
- change the orientation of work-stations so that, instead of facing the light source, workers have their sides or backs to the window

Good maintenance increases light at no cost

Even with the best lighting, you can be losing half of the light unless the windows are washed, the light bulbs are dusted, and the lights are replaced regularly. Because the output from bulbs and fluorescent tubes declines over time (25-30% during their life), the ones over the workstations should be replaced regularly. Do not scrap the old ones — put them in less-used areas, corridors or storage rooms.

Dirt on windows and skylights decreases available light by as much as 20 per cent. Because skylights are difficult to reach, no one cleans them. Set up a regular schedule to dust the lamps and clean the windows, inside and outside. Do not allow young workers to clean skylights because of the risk of falling. Assign them instead to cleaning walls and floors; you will notice a great difference in the light overall.

Noise levels are too high if you cannot hear someone speaking 2 meters away

Machines and power tools can make a great deal of noise. Young workers' hearing can be permanently damaged if they are exposed to noise for too long, or if the level of noise is too loud; they are more vulnerable to hearing damage than adults. Loud or sudden noise is also hazardous because it startles or distracts workers, and prevents warning shouts from being heard.

To reduce noise levels, there are 3 possible approaches to take

1 **Eliminate the source.** The best way to reduce noise is to buy new, quieter equipment. Although they may initially cost more, they are often of higher quality and last longer because they are built to tighter tolerances (e.g., gears fit together better). Shut down noisy equipment when not needed.

2 **Isolate it.** Enclose the machine or create a sound barrier between it and the workers. Compressors, pumps, or generators can sometimes be moved outside to covered areas or inside away from where workers routinely work. The level of noise drops quickly with distance from the source. Ear plugs are not a good or permanent solution because they make communication difficult — especially warnings — and because they are uncomfortable to wear for long periods workers tend to take them off.

3 **Maintenance.** Lubricate machines to prevent unnecessary wear and grinding noises. Replace chipped gear teeth, adjust vibrating or imbalanced parts, and inspect noise control attachments to ensure that they are functioning properly.

WELFARE FACILITIES

- **Do ensure clean drinking water is available**
- **Do insist that young workers take routine rest breaks**
- **Do provide access to good food and a clean place to eat it**

During each working day, young workers need to drink clean water (more than adults), eat meals and snacks, wash their hands, visit a lavatory and rest and recover from fatigue. This can be difficult or easy, unpleasant or comfortable, a health risk or an aid to hygiene and nutrition. A small investment in welfare facilities usually pays for itself in many ways. On the other hand, worker dissatisfaction can be costly.

Provide clean drinking water

Clean drinking water is essential for all types of work. Especially in a hot environment, each worker can easily lose several litres of water per work shift. If not provided with drinking facilities, workers become thirsty and gradually dehydrated. This greatly increases fatigue and lowers productivity.

The availability of water is particularly important for young workers because they need to drink more fluid than adults.

If you keep a supply of water near the workers, less time will be lost in going to get a drink and they will be more likely to drink enough. However, do not place drinking water in washrooms or toilets, near dangerous machines or other hazards or where it can be contaminated by dust, chemicals, or other substances.

Make sure that the drinking water is cool. If you cannot afford a water cooler, place the water in the coolest place in the factory. Do not leave it in the sun or in a hot place.

Make sure that rest means recovery

Young workers usually start the day alert and productive, but their energy level decreases as the day goes on. Fatigue grows gradually and may not be apparent until the person is really tired. Especially younger workers, because they lack seniority and self-confidence, have a tendency to keep pushing themselves to the limit. It is important for you, the manager, to insist on them taking breaks. If the worker rests before showing signs of fatigue, recovery is much faster. Short breaks taken frequently are much better than infrequent but long breaks. For most types of work, workers will produce much more with breaks than they can by working continuously. At least one ten-minute break in the morning and one in the afternoon, in addition to a longer break for lunch is absolutely necessary. A five-minute break every hour is an excellent idea.

A good rest area also helps to reduce fatigue. Getting away from a noisy, polluted or isolated workstation helps young workers relax and recover from fatigue. A simple canopy outside the workplace may provide a shady rest area, especially if there are plants and breezes. Avoid bright sunlight: the eyes need to rest as well as the body. A table and chairs are needed and a place to lie down can also be a good idea. This type of rest area can also double as a safe place to eat.








**HELPFUL
RESOURCES**

LET'S PROTECT THEM

WHO CAN HELP

Hazard control information

This booklet covers some potential problem areas of small businesses, but not all. It does not go into detail on hazardous chemicals, particularly the very toxic ones, nor can it cover all the laws and regulations which govern exposure to hazardous agents. These more technical areas require the assistance of specialized professionals such as occupational hygienists to identify, evaluate, and devise control measures. If you have Internet access, go to www.ilo.org/safework for help. Otherwise, contact a local occupational health specialist through your ministry of labour, ministry of health, medical school, or similar organization.

	Ambulance	112
	National fire brigade	111
	Traffic Police	113
	Isange one stop center (Harassment offence)	3512
	FERWACOTHE	+250)788504940 +250)788304749

ACTION CHECKLIST

LET'S PROTECT THEM

FOR PARENTS OWNING THE TEA PLANTATIONS

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE AT WORK

Important: Young people are more likely than their older colleagues to get hurt in the workplace. It could happen to your son or daughter, even on their first day at work. By law, employers are responsible for protecting young workers. But your child also needs to be aware of health and safety issues when they enter the world of work, if they want to stay safe.

Support your child. There are a number of things you can do to help your child stay safe when they start work:

1. Check that your child knows about her/his workplace rights:

- s/he has a right to know about health and safety
- s/he has a right to participate in discussions on health and safety issues, and to report any problems
- s/he has a right to refuse to do unsafe work.

2. Check that your child knows his/her responsibilities while at work:

- to work safely
- to report hazards
- to use the safety equipment and follow the training s/he has been given.

3. Find out:

- what tasks your child is being asked to carry out
- what training and supervision s/he is receiving
- what health and safety measures are in place to protect her/him.

4. Talk

- to your child, about workplace risks and risk prevention
- to their employer, about health and safety arrangements, training and supervision
- to other parents about health and safety.

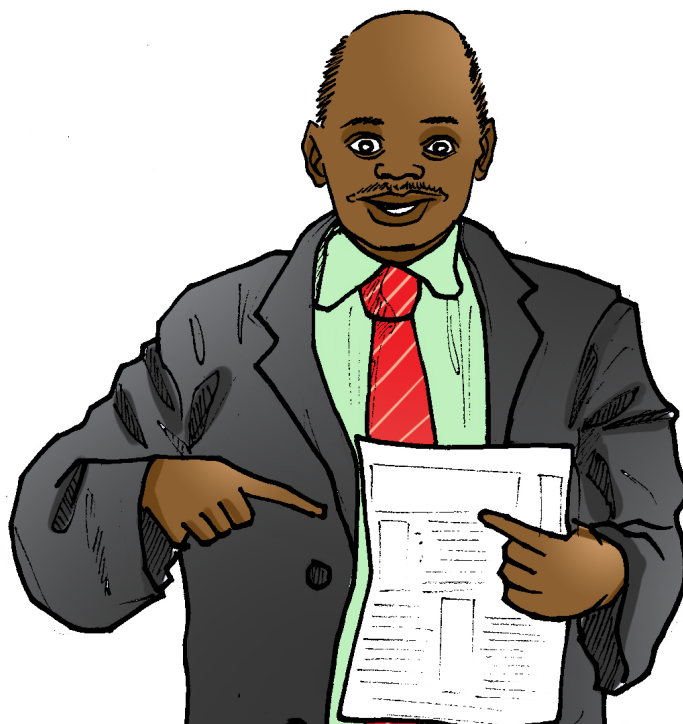
5. Encourage your child's school or training facility or apprentice master to integrate health and safety teaching into the curriculum.

ACTION CHECKLIST

The action checklist is a handy way to review whether your workshop is in compliance with legal requirements as well as ‘youth-friendly’. Letting your young workers help complete this checklist is an excellent idea!

Here is how to use it

1. Do a workplace inspection at least every six months.
2. Walk through the workshop and assess whether each item has already been applied, is not needed, or needs attention. Put a checkmark in the “no” or “yes” columns accordingly.
3. After you have finished, look again at the items in the “yes” column. Choose a few to be addressed immediately. Mark these items as a priority by putting a checkmark in the “!” column.
4. Be sure to put notes in the “comments” column because it is hard to remember details from one time to another. Especially make note of anything that should be followed up on in the next workplace inspection.



Question	Action notes		
General principles	Yes	No	!
There are some workers under the legal age in the workshop			
All your young workers have completed compulsory or basic schooling			
A young worker is showing signs of deprivation (not enough sleep, food, clothing)			
A young worker is showing signs of intimidation or fear			
Supervisors and co-workers have been informed what is safe for young workers to do			
All young workers have been trained on what to do during an accident or emergency			
An occupational safety and health plan has been developed for this workshop			
Working time			
A young worker sometimes works at night, goes home in the dark, or works overtime			
A young worker is allowed to work in an isolated area			
Harassment, Violence, and Stress			
A written policy against harassment and violence, particularly addressing the risks that young girl workers may face, has been developed			
The anti-harassment policy is posted in the workshop where all can see it			
Each new young worker has an assigned “buddy” to answer questions and keep an eye out for safety			
Materials storage and handling			
All young workers have been trained on correct lifting techniques			
Supervisors check periodically to make sure they are lifting correctly			
Some young workers do jobs that require lifting or carrying heavy loads			
Work-stations			
Some young workers squat or kneel for long periods of time			
Your young workers know and use the “elbow rule”			
Machine and tool safety			
Your young workers are only allowed to use machines and tools that have low potential for causing injuries or are closely supervised if they use power equipment			

Question	Action notes			
Hazardous substances	Yes	No	!	
Some of your young workers use or work around hazardous substances				
Chemicals, including containers into which chemicals have been poured, are labeled				
Chemical safety data sheets are kept on file for each chemical or mixture (e.g., paints, glues, solvents, acids) that the workshop uses or produces				
Young workers wash their hands with soap before eating or drinking				
Young workers wash themselves and change clothes before going home				
Lighting and noise				
Skylights and windows are cleaned regularly				
Ceilings and walls are painted white or in light colors and kept clean				
Workstations are adequately lighted				
There is no glare in the young worker's field of vision				
Noisy equipment and areas are marked with warning signs and young workers are trained on noise protection measures				
Noise levels are low enough that young workers do not need to shout to communicate				
Welfare facilities				
There is always cool, safe drinking water for young workers to drink				
Toilets are regularly cleaned, close to the work area, and have soap for washing				
All young workers have been trained on correct lifting techniques				
There are separate toilets for girls and women				
There is a clean and comfortable place for the workers to rest and eat				
Premises				
Metal walls and roofs are backed with insulation to protect workers from heat or cold				
Roof and wall openings, windows or open doorways provide natural ventilation				
During working hours, doors are unlocked so workers can escape easily in case of fire				
The workshop is not used as sleeping quarters after working hours				

LET'S PROTECT THEM