

Guide for Employers of Young Workers



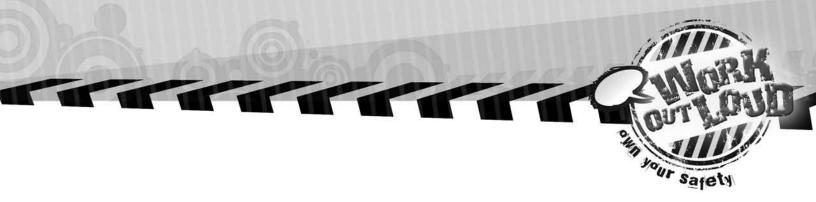
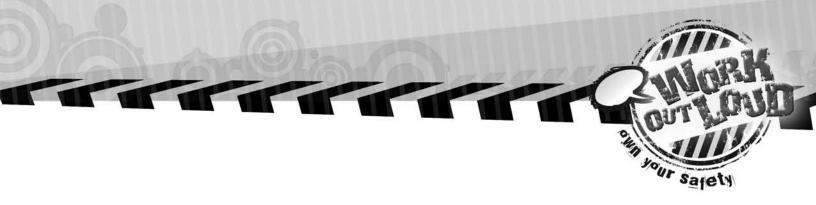


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If you are reading this guide, chances are you have young employees in your workplace. You are likely already aware that as an employer, you have a moral and legal responsibility to protect all your workers, whatever their age or experience. What you may be just discovering is how challenging it can be to fulfill those responsibilities when dealing with young workers. Young workers are at greater risk of being injured on the job than any other group of workers. This guide has been developed to help you deal with this workplace reality. In it you will find information on the following:

- your legal responsibilities as an employer
- the nature of young workers
- rights and responsibilities of workers
- safety orientation checklist
- effective ways to provide training
- how to encourage hazard awareness
- the importance of supervision
- further resources for employers

Young workers include workers between the ages of 15 and 24.

THE WCB OF PEI ENCOURAGES YOUNG WORKERS TO COME TO WORK WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, READY FOR WORK AND READY TO DO THEIR BEST. OUR MESSAGE TO YOUNG WORKERS IS "PREP IT!"





As an employer on Prince Edward Island, you are legally responsible for providing all of your workers with a safe workplace. This means adhering to health and safety regulations, providing appropriate and adequate supervision, and ensuring that all workers - especially young workers - have the necessary training and equipment to do their jobs safely.

Part 12 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* deals with duties of employers, and states:

- (1) An employer shall ensure
- (a) that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect the occupational health and safety of persons at or near the workplace;
- (b) that any item, device, material, equipment or machinery provided for the use of workers at a workplace is properly maintained, and is properly equipped with the safety features or devices, as recommended by the manufacturer or required by the regulations;
- (c) that such information, instruction, training, supervision, and facilities are provided as are necessary to ensure the occupational health and safety of the workers;
- (d) that workers and supervisors are familiar with occupational health or safety hazards at the workplace;

- (e) that workers are made familiar with the proper use of all safety features or devices, equipment and clothing required for their protection; and
- (f) that the employer's undertaking is conducted so that workers are not exposed to occupational health or safety hazards as a result of the undertaking.

You have direct responsibility for the safety of everyone in your workplace, as well as the potential to directly influence the health and safety attitudes and habits for the youth in your midst. What a great opportunity to affect change in your community for now and for the future!





Youth can be an exciting time filled with enthusiasm, creativity, high energy, adventure, and fun. These are admirable qualities, and ones we would not want to discourage in our youth. These very qualities, however, can sometimes lead young workers into dangerous workplace situations. Being creative while using a meat slicer; horsing around while driving a lawn tractor; or being absolutely certain one can operate a fork lift, having never been on one before, are all oneway tickets to workplace injury. One of the challenges, when dealing with young workers*, is to balance that youthful spirit of fun and adventure with a healthy respect for workplace hazards, and all the things that could - and do - go wrong. Hazards exist everywhere in the workplace and many of the controls put in place to keep workers safe involve following very specific directions, known as "safe work procedures." If young workers are not accustomed to rigid adherence to procedure, they may not understand that there are good reasons to be systematic and methodical. They need to have explained to them that when they deviate from safe work procedures by taking shortcuts or being "creative," there arises real potential for serious harm.

Youth can also be a time of inexperience and uncertainty, a time of feeling powerless about one's situation, and reluctant to ask questions or

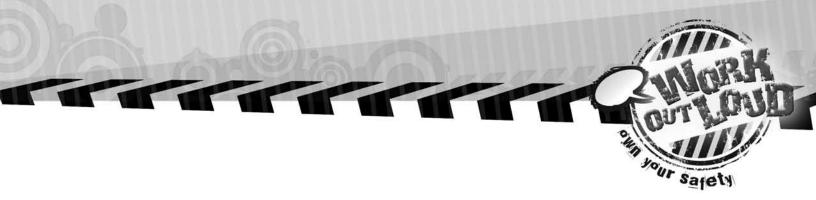
to question authority. Encouraging young workers to speak up for themselves - when it is not always in their nature to do so - is another of the challenges you face as an employer. Silence in the workplace can lead to danger, especially if young workers don't speak up to ask for what they need.

A simple statement, such as, "I don't understand; please explain that again" is often very difficult for a young worker to make. More likely would be self-talk, such as, "I don't really know how to run this thing, but I'll look stupid if I ask" or "I forget what he said to do next but I'll figure it out."

One of the challenges, when dealing with young workers, is to balance that youthful spirit of fun and adventure with a healthy respect for workplace hazards, and all the things that could - and do - go wrong.

* Please note that many of the points discussed here about young workers apply to new workers, as well. In cases where workers are new to a position, new to an organization, or perhaps even new to a culture, it is important that an employer consider how special circumstances can add to the challenges of taking on a new job.





When you are able to create an environment where workers are encouraged to ask questions about and participate in health and safety matters, the likelihood of injury in the workplace can be significantly reduced. Ways of doing this include the following:

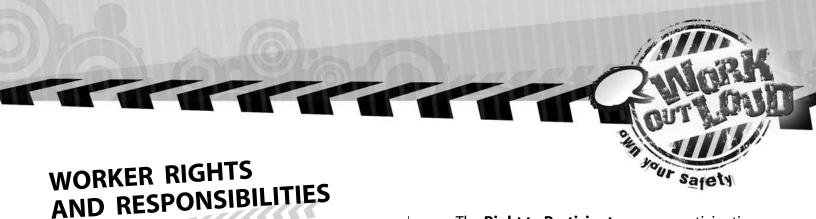
- Make yourself available during young worker orientation sessions
- Present yourself to young workers as approachable and accessible
- Introduce young workers to key safety people in your organization (Health & Safety Manager, JOSH committee members, or health and safety representatives)
- Pair up young workers with experienced, safety-conscious workers who will encourage their questions, and answer them
- Personally encourage young workers to report health and safety problems they may encounter, responding promptly when they do
- Regularly invite young workers to come forward with ideas and suggestions, and thank them when they do
- Make health and safety a part of all workplace communications

- When communicating with young workers, be aware of your body language, the tone of your voice, and other non-verbal communications
- Think back to when you were a young worker; what was helpful to you?

Encouraging young workers to speak up for themselves - when it is not always in their nature to do so - is another of the challenges you face as an employer.

THE WCB OF PEI ENCOURAGES YOUNG WORKERS TO ASK QUESTIONS, SEEK DIRECTION, AND MAKE THEMSELVES HEARD IN THE WORKPLACE. OUR MESSAGE TO YOUNG WORKERS IS "SAY IT!"





Everyone in the workplace, from a business owner to a newly hired worker has a shared responsibility to work together to prevent injury and illness in the workplace. This shared responsibility for workplace safety is known as the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) and is the fundamental principle upon which the Occupational Health and Safety Act is based. For this to work successfully young workers need to know about their responsibilities for safety on the job; they also need to know what they can expect employers and supervisors to provide in terms of a safe work environment. It is important, as well, that young workers be informed of the three basic rights granted to all workers – regardless of age or

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The **Right to Know** means knowing what is needed in order to do the job safely; this would include the right to receive training needed to identify and avoid all hazards that may exist in the workplace, what to do if there is an injury incident, where to locate first aid supplies, what work areas are off limits, and how to properly use personal protective equipment.

experience - by law. These rights are as follows:

- The Right to Participate means participating in decisions related to health and safety in the workplace; this would include participating in a formal way (as a member of the Joint Occupational Safety and Health Committee, or as an Occupational Health and Safety representative), as well as by asking questions, making suggestions, and bringing up safety concerns on a daily basis.
- The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work means that a worker may, by following a process outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, refuse to do any task that he deems hazardous to his health or safety. Under the law a worker cannot be punished for exercising his right to refuse unsafe work.

Along with the three basic rights, as outlined above, workers have important health and safety responsibilities to which they are legally binding. Part 16 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* deals with the duties of a worker and states:

- **16.** (1) A worker, while at work, shall
 - (a) take every reasonable precaution to protect the worker's own occupational health and safety and that of other persons at or near the workplace;

THE WCB OF PEI ENCOURAGES YOUNG WORKERS TO BECOME INFORMED ABOUT WORKPLACE SAFETY AND WORKER RIGHTS. OUR MESSAGE TO YOUNG WORKERS IS "KNOW IT!"





- (b) cooperate with the employer and with the other workers to protect the worker's own occupational health and safety and that of other persons at or near the workplace;
- (c) wear or use such individual protective equipment as is required by this Act and the regulations;
- (d) consult and cooperate with the committee or representative, if any;
- (e) cooperate with any person performing a duty or exercising a power conferred by this Act or the regulations; and
- (f) comply with this Act and the regulations.
- (2) Where a worker believes that any item, device, material, equipment or machinery, condition or aspect of the workplace is or may be dangerous to the worker's occupational health or safety or that of other persons at or near the workplace, the worker
- (a) shall immediately report it to a supervisor;
- (b) shall, where the matter is not remedied to the worker's satisfaction, report it to the committee or the representative, if any; and
- (c) may, where the matter is not remedied to the worker's satisfaction after the worker reports it in accordance with clauses(a) and (b), report it to an officer. 2004,c.42,s.16.

Making your workers aware of these duties or responsibilities, in a way that is meaningful to them, will be well worth the time it takes to do so.

Ways of doing this include the following:

- Refer workers to Part 16 in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (hard copy or WCB website)
- Discuss each duty in the context of your workplace, citing specific examples
- Discuss the Internal Responsibility System, so workers know everyone has responsibilities for health and safety in the workplace
- Make it a point to comment whenever you see a worker actively fulfilling these OHS duties in the workplace
- Make health and safety a part of all workplace communications





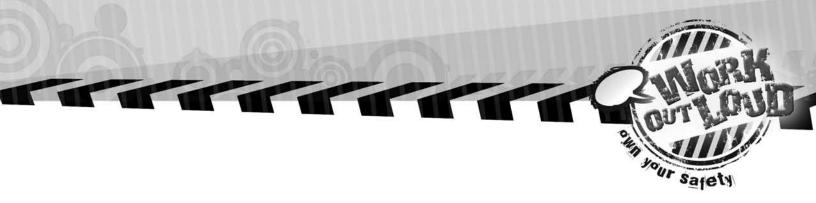
When hiring young workers it is important that you orient them to your workplace before you expect them to be responsible for the work you hired them to do. A critical part of this workplace orientation will be the Safety Orientation, when you introduce new workers to the many aspects of safety in your workplace. Included in this orientation would be such things as:

- the company safety program
- personal protective equipment
- responsibilities and processes for reporting injury incidents
- identification and control of hazards
- First Aid details
- emergency evacuation details
- any other safety concerns related to your particular organization

The checklist on the following two pages may be used as a guide for your Safety Orientation. Copy this one, or develop something similar, adapting it to suit your organization and your particular needs. Use the checklist as a guide for discussion, and to document the fact that you did cover the important safety points.

Consider repeating the whole process once the new worker has been on the job for three weeks. It is amazing what new learning can be gained when a lesson already delivered to a new worker, can be repeated after the learner has some experience!

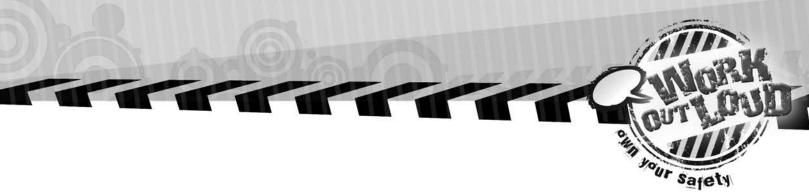
Use the Safety Orientation
Checklist as a guide for
discussion, and to document
the fact that you did cover the
important safety points.



This checklist is a guideline for conducting a safety orientation for workers new to a company or department. Once completed and signed by both the supervisor and the worker, it serves as documentation that a proper orientation has taken place.

• •			
Worker's Name			
Supervisor's Name			
Date Worker Started			
Date of Orientation			
Name of Person Giving the Orientation			
Place a check in each box to indicate that the topic h	as been covered.		
Explanation of the company safety program,	First Aid Supplies, Equipment and Training		
including: ☐ Orientation ☐ On-the-job training ☐ Safety meetings ☐ Accident investigation and reporting ☐ Function of the safety committee (if there is one) ☐ Young Worker materials posted and/or distributed Personal Protective Equipment ☐ Hard hats ☐ Safety glasses ☐ High visibility vests ☐ Rubber gloves ☐ Respiratory protective equipment ☐ Other protective equipment specific to job	 Obtaining first aid treatment Location of first aid stations Location and names of staff with first aid training Review Hazards Specific to Job Duties Physical hazards (ladders, electricity, repetitive work, hot oil, etc.) Chemical hazards (cleaning chemicals, toxic substances, dust, paint, asbestos, etc.) Biological hazards (bacteria, viruses, fungi, mold, insects, etc.) Ergonomic hazards (work station design, lifting, repetitive movements, etc.) 		
Lines of Communication and Responsibility for Repo	orting Accidents:		
 □ When to report an injury □ How to report an injury □ To whom an injury should be reported □ Filing an accident report form □ Reporting "near misses" 			





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En	nergency Plan
	Exit locations and evacuation routes Use of fire fighting equipment (extinguisher, hose) Specific procedures (medical, chemical, fire, etc.)
Ve	hicle Safety Check Procedure
	Safety and speed regulations Operating license appropriate for vehicle
Pe	rsonal Work Habits
	Safe work procedures Smoking policy Good housekeeping practices Proper lifting techniques
Ot	her Health and Safety Items
	d any other health and safety items the worker needs to know about your workplace, such as security ocedures for working alone. You may need to provide education and training for these at another time.
sat	e signatures below are evidence that the topics contained in this checklist have been discussed to the isfaction of the worker and supervisor. Signing indicates that both parties accept responsibility for sintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
Su	pervisor's Signature
Wc	orker's Signature
	te





Once a worker has received a basic orientation to the workplace - including discussion about workplace hazards, worker rights and responsibilities, and the duties of employers - the time has come for specific job training. The time you spend on training young workers is time well spent towards the health and safety of those workers and others around them. Not only is it wise to provide ample time on training, it is your legal responsibility as an employer to ensure that "such information, instruction, training, supervision and facilities are provided as are necessary to ensure the occupational health and safety of the workers."

If it is not yourself doing the training of young workers, consider the importance of the job you have entrusted to someone else in your organization. Provide the support these supervisors/managers need to do their jobs well, including ample training opportunities in how to train, how to communicate, and how to supervise. Consider the value of attending at least part of the training session. Your presence will provide a visible reminder to your workers – both young workers as well as management - of the importance you place on training. Your presence will also provide you with an excellent opportunity to see your supervisors/managers interact with those under their supervision. Being present for at least part of the training session will give you a reference point for your own future interactions with young workers.

Specifically, young workers need to be trained in how to:

- Perform tasks safely
- Operate machines and equipment safely
- Use and maintain required personal protective equipment
- Follow safe work procedures

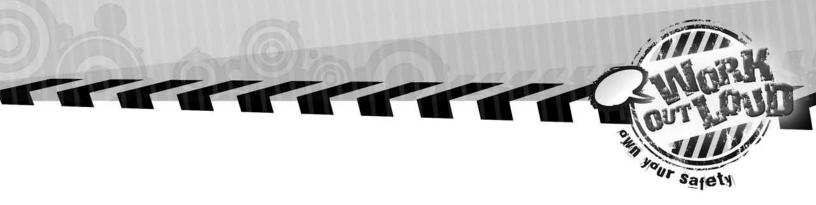
It may also be necessary to explain to young workers what tasks they should NOT do without specific training or qualifications, such as operating certain pieces of machinery or handling chemicals.

Keep written records of the training that is provided to each worker, by documenting:

- who did the training
- what training was done
- when the training was done
- that the trainer feels confident the training is complete
- that the worker feels confident the training is complete

Not only is it wise to provide ample time on training, it is your legal responsibility as an employer ...





It is certain that workers will learn one way or another, either by making mistakes and being corrected (or injured), or by gradually catching on to what they see others doing. Neither of these approaches to training is acceptable in fulfilling your duties as an employer. The only responsible approach to training is through a systematic planned process which prepares workers to do their jobs safely and efficiently. This training should include techniques to develop information and knowledge, as well as the necessary hands-on training, guided practice, and supervision.

One method of training which has been proven over many years to be successful uses four steps, as follows: motivate, tell and show, test, and check. These four steps - motivate, tell and show, test, and check - ensure that many important aspects of training are covered, and set the learner up for safety, success and efficiency with the task.

It is important to regard training as an ongoing process. There are many times in a workplace when specific training is required, and it is up to you, as the employer to be mindful of these times. It is not only new workers who need training, but also experienced workers when new equipment or new procedures have been brought into the workplace, or when workers have been reassigned to new tasks or a new workplace location. When you regard training as a valued everyday commitment, as well as a legal responsibility, the benefits to the health and well-being of all of your workers - and indeed your entire organization - will be significant.

- **Motivate** Find out what the learner already knows
 - Emphasize the importance of the task
 - Build learner's interest

- **Tell and show** Explain how the task is to be done
 - Demonstrate how the task is to be done
 - Stress key points

- **Test** Have learner explain how the task is to be done
 - Have learner demonstrate how the task is to be done
 - Guide, correct, repeat/review directions, as needed

Workers will "learn" whether or not you provide the training. Make sure they learn the right way the first time.

- **Check** Ensure supports are in place, as needed
 - Use positive reinforcement where appropriate
 - Check back often to answer questions, review key points, and monitor progress



As every employer knows, a hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm to a person or property. Understanding and controlling those hazards pays off in fewer and less severe injuries, and in cost savings for the organization. It is the legal responsibility of you, as an employer to ensure that workers are informed about hazards in the workplace, and how to control them. Part 12 (d) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* states:

"An employer shall ensure

(d) that workers and supervisors are familiar with occupational health or safety hazards at the workplace."

Beyond the legal obligation, it is good practice and an excellent investment in health and safety for you to offer your workers training in hazard assessment. Young workers, particularly, are at risk for workplace injury, due, in part, to their inexperience with the workplace and their inexperience with hazards. Even the most obvious hazards may have to be pointed out to them until they become more adept at identifying hazards on their own.

Encourage workers to categorize hazards according to the following four types:

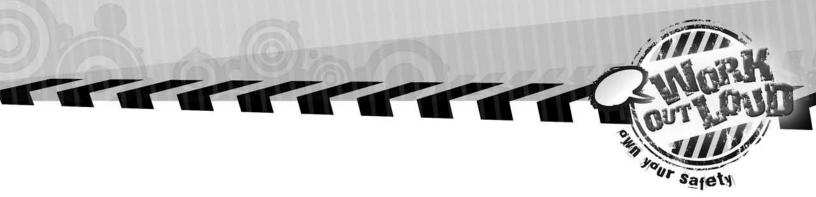
- Physical
- Chemical
- Biological
- Ergonomic

Train workers to understand the categories in a general sense, as well as specific to your workplace. On page 17 is a template for a table you could prepare, using your workplace and the hazards found there. Reviewing such a table with your young workers expands their thinking about hazards, encouraging them to consider important questions associated with hazard assessment such as "What could happen?" and "What corrective action should be taken?"

Hazard Assessment Chart Sample

Type of Hazard	What Could Happen?	What Corrective Action Should be Taken?	
PHYSICAL			
Loud Noise	Worker could sustain hearing loss	Worker should wear hearing protection adequate to lower noise levels to safe levels	





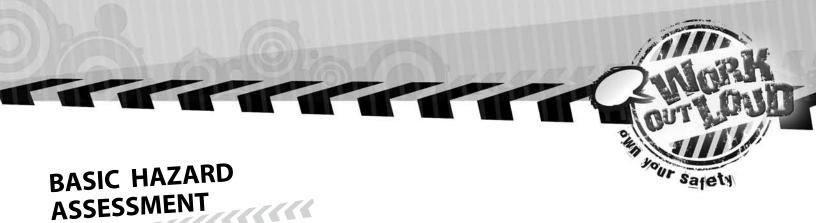
Point out to young workers the four basic elements in any workplace, and therefore another way of thinking about hazards and where to find them. The four basic elements are:

- the people (workers, customers, visitors, suppliers, etc)
- the environment they work in
- · the material they work with
- the equipment or tools they use

Hazards will always involve one or more of these elements, so each should be looked at in turn. How the four elements interact to get the work done each day (process) also needs to be looked at in terms of identifying hazards.

When you encourage young workers to watch for hazards wherever they are – and to report them immediately - you are empowering them with their own safety and that of their workmates. When you give them guidelines and categories to use when watching for hazards, you are giving them the rights tools to do the job.

Beyond the legal obligation, it is good practice, and an excellent investment in health and safety for you to offer your workers training in hazard assessment.



Type of Hazard	What Could Happen?	What Corrective Action Should be Taken?
PHYSICAL		
CUENICAL		
CHEMICAL		
BIOLOGICAL		
Біоговіємі		
ERGONOMIC		

THE WCB OF PEI ENCOURAGES YOUNG WORKERS TO LOOK FOR HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE.

OUR MESSAGE TO YOUNG WORKERS IS "SPOT IT!"





As was stated earlier, workers between the ages of 15 and 24 are at greater risk of being injured on the job than any other group of workers.

Although this can be attributed to many factors, including inexperience and lack of training, a huge factor is inadequate supervision. Part 12(c) of the

"An employer shall ensure

Occupational Health and Safety Act states:

(c) that such information, instruction, training, supervision and facilities are provided as are necessary to ensure the occupational health and safety of the workers."

Supervision is really that fourth and last step of the training process (motivate, tell and show, test, and check). This is the step where the checking is done – on a regular, ongoing basis – in order to:

- Give extra support and direction, as needed
- Take note of and reinforce safe work practices
- Catch and immediately correct mistakes and short cuts
- Strictly enforce the use of required personal protective equipment
- Take note of and address anything that may have been overlooked in the initial training

Supervision of a worker begins as soon as a worker is encouraged to try out a new process or a new piece of equipment, and continues all the while that worker is in your employ. It stands to

reason that the need for supervision will diminish as the worker gains experience, skill, and confidence. Keep in mind, however, that the supervision of young workers requires a higher level of due diligence because of their general lack of experience. You may need to spend more time making sure these workers understand why the task is performed in a certain way, and making sure they are ready before leaving them to perform the work alone.

The supervision of young workers requires a higher level of due diligence because of their general lack of experience.

It is important to note that while the Occupational Health and Safety Act states it is the employer's responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all workers in the workplace, it is usually the supervisor who is assigned this duty on a day to day basis. A supervisor has the responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all workers under his/her supervision. Many young workers won't ask questions about workplace health and safety for fear of looking incompetent or simply because they don't know what to ask. They are more likely to rely on their immediate supervisor for health and safety training and direction than older more experienced workers. Providing adequate supervision is perhaps the single most important duty a supervisor has.





Given the significant burden of responsibility resting on the shoulders of a supervisor (who may, in fact, be another young worker), it stands to reason that you choose this person with care, and provide this person with all the training and support needed to fulfill supervisory duties. A point to note here is that a supervisor is a person who instructs, directs, and controls workers in the performance of their duties – even if they don't have the title of supervisor. As an employer, make sure you are aware of the duties you are asking of your workers, especially in regards to supervising the work of others.

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THE WCO OF PEI ENCOURAGES YOUNG WORKERS TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR OWN SAFETY AND MAKE A SAFE SPACE FOR EVERYONE AROUND THEM. OUR MESSAGE TO YOUNG WORKERS IS "OWN IT!"





At the Workers Compensation Board of PEI, we have many resources (multimedia, print materials, OHS staff consultants) available to employers. Information about all of our resources may be found on our website, at www.wcb.pe.ca

If you need help with a concern involving the safety of your workplace and your workers, please call us at Occupational Health and Safety, 368-5697, or check out our website.







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