

# Protecting Yourself

## Tips for... **Young Workers**



By law, you have **basic rights, including:**

- 1. The Right to Know** about what hazards there are in your workplace and to know what to do to prevent injuries from them.
- 2. The Right to Participate** in health and safety activities in your workplace without fear of discipline.
- 3. The Right to Refuse** work that you reasonably believe can be dangerous to yourself or others.

However, you also have **responsibilities** including:

- 1. Work Safely:** use all machinery and equipment the way you were trained to.
- 2. Report Hazards:** if you know that Ontario's health and safety laws are not being followed, you must report the circumstances to your supervisor or employer as soon as possible.
- 3. Use or Wear Protective Devices:** don't remove a guard or device designed to protect you. Wear your safety gear – it's the law.

### **Don't say it'll never happen**

An average of 42 young workers are injured or killed on the job every day in Ontario. Workplace accidents can happen at any job and can cause serious injuries. Just read Candace's story.

#### **Candace's Story**

*Safety wasn't the first thing on Candace Carnahan's mind when she began a summer job in a paper mill. Tragically, however, in a near fatal episode her foot became caught in a conveyor belt, dragging her helplessly until the machine could be stopped. The catastrophe left her with an amputated leg. It almost claimed her life. Proper safety practices could have prevented this and countless other tragedies, which affect thousands of young workers every year.*



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### **Questions we often ask ourselves about our jobs:**

- How do I look?
- What will my co-workers think about me?
- Will I be able to keep the job?
- How much money will I make?

### **However, we need to consider other issues:**

- Will I be trained enough in order to do my job safely?
- Am I able to recognize possible hazards?
- Do I know my rights and responsibilities?
- Could an accident disfigure me or cost me my life?



## Protect yourself. Know your rights and responsibilities.

For more information for young workers go to [www.youngworker.ca](http://www.youngworker.ca) or [www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca](http://www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca)

If you need help with a concern about safety in your workplace, call the local office of the Ontario Ministry of Labour (listed in the blue pages of your phone book) or 1-800-268-8013.

You go to driving school to become a safer, smarter driver, so why not get the same advantage in the workplace? A \$9.00 lifetime Passport to Safety membership provides a standardized safety test, a nationally recognized safety transcript for you to attach to your résumé, and 24/7 access to workplace safety resources. Find out more about it at:

[www.passporttosafety.com](http://www.passporttosafety.com)

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## Some signs that a workplace may be unsafe...

- Other employees are getting injured on the job
- You work without direct supervision
- You have not been trained properly
- Equipment is unguarded or broken
- Chemical containers aren't labelled
- Shortcuts are used to save time
- Poor housekeeping and maintenance, e.g. floors are slippery and electrical cords are frayed

## How to protect yourself...

- Learn** to do the job safely. Are you in any danger?
- Think** the job through. Know what to do when there's an injury or emergency situation.
- Ask, Ask, Ask** – There are no stupid questions.
- Get help**, especially if you have to lift something heavy.
- Wear the gear** – Find out what to wear to protect yourself, how to wear it and how to maintain it.
- Inform** your supervisor if you see anything unsafe that may hurt you or someone else.
- Report injuries** – If you get hurt, it's your job to tell your supervisor.
- Talk** to your family about your job. Sometimes they know something you don't know!

Minimum Age Requirements for Working in Ontario	
14 years old	Establishments such as offices, stores, arenas, restaurant serving areas.
15 years old	Factories (other than logging operations), restaurant kitchens and warehouses.
16 years old	Construction, surface mine (except the working face); logging operations; mining plants.
18 years old	Underground mining or a working face of a surface mine; window cleaning.

## If you think your job is unsafe, do something about it.