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safety/index.fr.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/index.fr.html)

# Young Worker Safety & Education Initiative

- by Judy Fraser

Improved safety and health education for young people and the need to reduce young worker injuries were at the centre of a number of key recommendations in the *Workplace Safety and Health Review Committee Report*. The report was a result of public hearings about workplace safety and health that were held in the fall of 2001. Work is underway to develop education resources to improve safety and health education for those in the 15 -24 year age group. Activities are also in progress to improve resource materials and the delivery of safety and health education in the post-secondary system as well as for those outside the school system.

In May 2002, the Workplace Safety and Health Division (WSH) appointed a co-ordinator to plan and implement a Young Worker Safety and Education Initiative.

The program is being developed in conjunction with the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) as well as several branches in Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, and Manitoba Advanced Education. It is a co-operative and joint approach with a number of internal and external organizations, agencies and other government departments.

Did you know, in 2001 in Manitoba:

- 7000 young workers (15 - 24 years of age) were injured seriously enough that they had to miss time from work?
- Young workers were more likely to be injured than their experienced counterparts?
- Males under 25 were more likely to be injured on the job than any other group of workers?

- More than 40% of work related incidents happened during a young worker's first six months on the job?

According to research, young workers are at higher risk of being injured on the job because:

- They tend to think they're invincible (it won't happen to me).
- They are not always aware of the risks involved in their jobs, or what they need to do to protect themselves.
- They may be eager to impress an employer and may not ask questions for fear of losing their job or appearing incapable.

A Young Worker Safety and Education Advisory Committee (made up of business, labour, government, safety organizations and other individuals interested in occupational safety and health issues pertaining to youth) has been established to provide ongoing advice and guidance on youth-related safety and health issues.

Additional working groups have been established to proceed with specific tasks. The primary focus for the groups is to assist in achieving a reduction in workplace injuries, and help build a workplace safety and health culture in Manitoba. This will be accomplished by creating a variety of resources that provide information, instruction, training and expertise about workplace safety and health to young workers, parents, employers, educators and the community.

# Changing the Culture One Classroom at a Time: The Workers of Tomorrow Health and Safety Campaign

**D**o you remember your first day in the workplace? Every day, young Manitobans are gaining new experiences and skills in their first jobs. Whether young workers are starting off babysitting or working in a manufacturing plant, they are entering the world of work. A great deal of preparation goes into writing a resume and finding a job. Sadly, there is often far too little consideration given to whether or not a young worker will return from work uninjured, healthy and alive.

Unfortunately, it is not just young workers that face these challenges. New workers, who are entering a new job for the first time, also face similar issues. Young and new workers may feel intimidated about asking questions or raising concerns in the workplace and may not be receiving adequate training to do their job safely. They may take risks related to a lack of knowledge, and may feel as though there is no possibility of becoming injured or ill at work.

More importantly, young and new workers generally do not know their legislated rights regarding health and safety; do not know how to report an injury or illness; and are not aware of basic hazards that they may encounter in the workplace.

Manitoba youth, 15-24 years of age, are among the most susceptible to workplace injury, illness and death. The Workers of Tomorrow Health and Safety Campaign came into existence in 1997 to make Manitoba youth aware of their rights and other information that could potentially save their lives. In the past six years, our non-profit organization has made presentations to over 30,000 students throughout the province. Our mission is to create awareness for safe and healthy workplaces in Manitoba.

Workers of Tomorrow relies on three staff members and over 100 volunteer speakers from labour, government and business to deliver the presentations. One staff and one or more volunteer speakers co-present. Wherever possible, local and vocation-specific speakers are provided. For example, if we are speaking to a power mechanics class in Dauphin, we will try to pair a mechanic from Dauphin with the class. This has proven to be very effective since local people tend to be more aware of the employment realities of their particular community.

There are also people on the volunteer speakers' bureau that have lost a family member to a workplace incident or who have been injured on the job themselves. The stories that these individuals are able to share are extremely powerful, and give students an opportunity to see that these incidents do happen, and that the effects are long-lasting and life-altering.

Presentations are given to students in junior high and high schools; training centers; and colleges and universities at no cost to the school or school division. All of this is made possible with support from the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba's Community Initiatives and Research Program; the Manitoba Federation of Labour; various unions and organizations; Inco Ltd.; Manitoba Hydro and other corporate sponsors. In addition, a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat enabled us to produce a series of plain-language safety information sheets pertaining to general safety and health in the workplace as well as vocation-specific information.

While there is currently some curriculum related to occupational safety and health in vocational programs in Manitoba schools, it is relatively minimal. There is a great deal of work being done by Manitoba Education and Youth to include this information in the curriculum. However, Workers of Tomorrow is available as a resource to all teachers so that all students may be equipped with vital information.

Workers of Tomorrow shares the interest of keeping young and new workers in Manitoba safe and healthy in the workplace. We strongly feel that any workplace injury, illness or death is not acceptable and can be prevented. Educating young and new workers will contribute to a culture shift in our province. Changing a culture comes slowly, but we are continuously working toward this goal, one classroom at a time.

For more information or to find out how you or your organization can become involved, please contact:

**Kerilyn Molinski**  
Safety Education Consultant  
Workers of Tomorrow Safety Centre Inc.  
Voice: (204) 992-2988  
Fax: (204) 956-4864  
E-mail: kerilynmolinskiwot@mts.net  
Website: www.workersoftomorrow.com

## Fast Facts for Employers / Supervisors

### Why should I focus on young workers?

As an employer, you have legal responsibilities to ensure all workers are trained and can do their jobs without unnecessary risk. Young workers are often less experienced and unable to recognize hazards. Many won't ask questions about workplace safety for fear of looking incompetent or simply because they don't know what to ask. Sometimes they come to work tired after spending the day at school. It is critical that employers provide adequate supervision and training for young workers.

- Create a workplace culture that encourages young workers to ask questions about any health and safety concerns they may have.
- Comply with workplace safety and health regulations that apply to your workplace. This sends a positive message about the safety behaviour that is expected and ensures all staff are held accountable for their responsibilities.
- Correct unsafe conditions or incorrect work performance as soon as it is recognized.
- Make sure your supervisors have the training and skills to ensure the health and safety of the people they supervise.

Keep in mind that young workers may need a different kind of supervision.

- Supervisors may need to spend a bit more time making sure they understand why the task is performed in a certain way. Be clear about the expectations and then be sure to reinforce them.
- Supervisors must always observe a new worker performing a task before leaving them to perform the work alone.
- Encourage young workers to ask for help when they are unsure of a task.
- Supervisors must know the hazards associated with the jobs they are supervising and ensure their workers are made aware of them.

If you have questions about workplace safety and health, visit our website at: [www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety). You can also call our Client Services office at 945-6848, or outside Winnipeg at 1-800-282-8069.

# LEGALLY YOURS

In the pursuit of the objectives of *The Workplace Safety and Health Act* (Chapter W210), it is necessary to prosecute individuals or firms who are in contravention of the Act. Publication of this information is intended to inform and educate both employers and workers of the responsibilities that are **legally yours** in the hope that some may learn from the experiences of others. Any similarity between the names of persons charged and those not connected with the infraction or operation are coincidental.

COURT DATE	INFRACTION DATE	PERSON/CO. CHARGED	CONTRAVENTIONS	TOTAL PENALTIES
Aug 15/02	Dec 7/00	Uniflyte Co. Ltd.	Failure to maintain a punch press so far as was reasonably practicable W210 4(2)(a)	\$18,000 + \$ 2,700 (Victims' Surcharge)
Aug 29/02	Mar 13/00	Wolverine West Inc.	Failure to notify the Workplace Safety and Health Division of a serious accident as required by M.R. 108/88R, 8.	\$ 1,500 + \$ 252 (Victim's Surcharge and Costs)
Oct 1/02	Apr 18/99	City of Winnipeg (Transcona Pool)	Appeal by the City of Winnipeg of \$90,000 fine imposed on August 10, 2001	Appeal by City dismissed
Oct 10/02	Feb 23/01	Premier Packaging Services Inc.	Failure to guard machinery as far as was reasonably practicable, M.R. 108/88R, 15(a)	\$ 5,000 + \$ 750 (Victims' Surcharge)
Oct 18/02	Aug 17/00	Monarch Industries Ltd.	Failure to provide workers information, instruction and supervision respecting use of elevated work platforms. W210 4(2)(b)	\$15,000 + \$ 2,250 (Victims' Surcharge)
Nov 4/02	Oct 31/00	I.C.E. Manufacturing Ltd.	Failure to provide appropriate information, instruction, and training respecting the operation of a slip form roller machine W210 4(2)(b)	\$12,500 + \$ 1,875 (Victims' Surcharge)
	Aug 14/02		Failure to guard machinery so far as was reasonably practicable M.R. 108/88R, 15(a)	\$12,500 + \$ 1,875 (Victims' Surcharge)

## Propane Leaks May be *Undetectable*

In our last issue (Winter 2003) we published an article, titled "Temporary Heat on Construction Sites - Using Propane Fired Heating Appliances." We thought it was important to supplement that article with information to make our readers (especially those who work with or around propane) aware of the fact that you may not always smell a propane leak.

In its natural state, propane is an odorless gas. Therefore, in order to provide a way to detect a leak, a foul-smelling odorant with a distinctive smell (usually ethyl mercaptan) is added. However, because the odorant is not always effective, you may not be aware that you are in the area of a propane leak.

Physical/environmental conditions can play a part in a person's ability to smell. While physical reasons such as allergies, colds, smoking, and age can affect or lessen the sense, environmental conditions, which include continued exposure to propane's odorant, additional strong odors, or simple inattention, can result in failure to detect the odor altogether.

Propane's odorant may also go undetected due to "odor fade." Oxidation, adsorption and absorption can cause propane's odor to fade, diminish or disappear. Circumstances that can cause propane's odorant to lose its distinctive smell include exposure to rust or scale in tanks, cylinders or piping; certain soil types can also react with the odorant, causing a filtered effect.

Although the use of propane odorant is the best method to detect leaking propane, it is important to take additional precautions in order to protect the safety and health of those who work with or around propane, which include:

- Prevent leaks from occurring by maintaining and inspecting propane piping, tanks, cylinders and equipment.
- Don't allow propane tanks or cylinders to run empty. The possibility of "odor fade" increases when tanks or cylinders become empty!
- If a tank or cylinder does run empty, close the shutoff valve immediately to prevent air from entering. Never use or allow the use of a tank or cylinder that has sat empty with its shutoff valve open, unless it is properly purged and corrosion protected.
- Ensure that persons working with or around propane are aware of, and understand the issue of "odor fade." Note: odor fade is not limited to older, rusty tanks - it has been observed in new tanks as well.
- Where appropriate, gas detectors can be installed as a backup warning device. Gas detectors can detect the presence of propane even if there is no odor.



# Meet Our New Ergonomists



**Jeff Baxter** comes to the Workplace Safety and Health Division from an ergonomics and rehabilitation consulting firm in British Columbia where he worked as an ergonomics consultant. He is a graduate of the Kinesiology program at the Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. He has been with the British Columbia consulting firm for the past two years, working with clients including the west coast logging industry. Jeff said that he

is looking forward to working with the various industries throughout the province with the goal of injury risk reduction and a movement towards healthier workplaces.

**Alex Stuart** is a graduate of the Human Kinetics program at the University of Guelph in Ontario. He comes to the Workplace Safety and Health Division from operation of his own ergonomics consulting firm in Ontario. He was drawn to the field of ergonomics because of the problem solving nature of the work. "As an ergonomist, the excitement is in finding practical solutions to the different problems encountered in each work environment."

Alex said that he looks forward to helping reduce the number of musculo-skeletal injuries in workplaces across Manitoba.



# WHAT'S NEW?

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Day of Mourning

April 28, 2003

- The City of Winnipeg will hold its annual Day of Mourning Ceremony at 9:30 a.m. on the 2nd floor of the Council Chamber Building. For information on additional events please call Wayne Bergen at (204) 986-7669.
- The Workers of Tomorrow will hold the Annual Leaders Walk from 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., starting at the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) Union Centre, 275 Broadway.
- The Manitoba Federation of Labour will be holding its annual Memorial Service and Candlelight Vigil at 6:00 p.m. in Room 2C of the Union Centre.

### The Manitoba Federation of Labour 22nd Annual Health & Safety Conference

*Kikivak Inn - The Pas, Manitoba*

May 8th & 9th, 2003

For more information, or transportation/registration details, please call Winnipeg office at 947-1400 by May 1st, 2003.



### North American Occupational Safety & Health Week (NAOSH)

May 4th to 10th, 2003

This year's theme:  
*Prepare Young Workers for the Future*  
For information on local events, please call Doug Perrin at (204) 788-2984.



### Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba Community Initiatives and Research Program

Call for Proposals

- This year's program focuses on the occupational health and safety of aboriginal people, those with literacy challenges, and gender issues related to occupational safety. Those interested in applying must submit a Letter of Intent, to be received no later than April 25, 2003. Selected applicants will then be invited to submit a full proposal. More information and a copy of the grant application package may be obtained from the WCB by logging on to [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca) or by calling (204) 954-4650, or toll-free in Canada 1-800-362-3340 (ext. 4650).

### Farm Safety Day Camps

Manitoba is geared up to conduct 12 Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camps beginning on April 24th, 2003. For details on locations and Camp coordinators, contact Cathy Vanstone at (204) 239-3354.



Visit: [www.callb4udig.mb.ca](http://www.callb4udig.mb.ca) for a list of utilities to be contacted.



Visit our WEB page at [www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/) and provide your comments to the editor of WorkSafe  
- Darlene Muisse at [dmuisse@gov.mb.ca](mailto:dmuisse@gov.mb.ca)

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Fax: (204) 945-4556  
E-mail: [dmuisse@gov.mb.ca](mailto:dmuisse@gov.mb.ca)

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## Young Worker Resources

For more information on occupational health and safety for young workers, there are a number of Web sites to visit, including:



<http://job-one.ccohs.ca/>

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

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

[www.ccohs.ca/youngworkers](http://www.ccohs.ca/youngworkers)

