

Supporting young workers in summer jobs

Clear communication and supportive supervision help protect safety and well-being

Starting a new summer job can be exciting, but it can also feel stressful for young workers entering an unfamiliar environment for the first time.

Young workers in Ontario are three times more likely to be injured during their first month on the job. Lack of experience and training can make it difficult to recognize hazards or use equipment safely, and some workers may feel pressure to work quickly or take on tasks beyond their abilities.

Under Ontario's Internal Responsibility System (IRS), everyone in the workplace shares responsibility for health and safety. Employers, supervisors, and workers all have a role to play in preventing injuries and supporting a safe work environment.

How to support young workers' mental health

- Foster a workplace culture where safety and mental health can be discussed openly, without stigma.
- Encourage young workers to pause and ask questions if they are unsure about a task or procedure.
- Create an environment where workers feel comfortable speaking up when they do not feel safe or prepared to perform a task.
- Make regular check-ins part of the job and encourage workers to discuss concerns with supervisors or trusted supports such as parents or guardians.
- Promote healthy work conditions through predictable scheduling, manageable workloads, and adequate rest between shifts.
- Recognize effort and provide positive feedback so workers feel valued and confident in their role.
- Know the signs of psychological distress and how to find [mental health services for youth](#).

By working together and maintaining open communication, workplaces can help ensure young workers stay both physically and mentally safe throughout the busy summer season.

For more information, [contact your local WSN Health and Safety Specialist](#).