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## *Short presentation format*

*20 minutes*

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## *Long presentation format*

*40 minutes*

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# *Using this information kit*

## *Purpose*

The purpose of this information kit is to empower young people to make their workplaces safer and healthier.

It is suitable for young people between the ages of 15 to 25 years who are either working in part-time work after school and during the holidays, or are in their first jobs since leaving school. It is also useful for people of all ages who have little or no knowledge of health and safety in the workplace.

This kit can be used either as a short introduction to health and safety in the workplace, (a presentation that lasts 20 minutes). Or, as a longer presentation using case studies (40 minutes).

Three case studies have been included to help discussion so you can choose the case study or studies most suitable for your audience, or, you can use one of your own.

This kit has 10 pages that can either be photocopied as overhead transparencies (OHTs) or used as handouts for participants. Each page suitable for use as an OHT or as a handout is clearly marked "OHT" at the bottom. Notes for the presenter appear on separate pages and are clearly labeled "commentary" at the bottom.

## *Who can use this kit*

- Secondary school teachers for:
  - form period classes
  - short lessons
  - transition and life skills classes
  - social studies classes
  - English classes
- Polytechs and Universities.
- Employers and unions in the workplace.

# *Introduction*

Look at the following facts and myths about health and safety in the workplace. Record your response in the tick boxes.

1 Accidents in the workplace hardly ever happen.

TRUE     FALSE

2 Most people who have accidents in the workplace are clumsy and probably deserve it.

TRUE     FALSE

3 If you don't want to get injured at work you should avoid jobs using heavy machinery and get an office job.

TRUE     FALSE

4 The Health and Safety in Employment Act is the law that sets rules about health and safety in New Zealand workplaces.

TRUE     FALSE

## *Introduction*

### *Commentary*

1 Answer: false.

Accidents in the workplace are very common.

- Did you know that every week an accident at work kills someone somewhere in New Zealand. For every death, many more people are seriously injured.
- Young people are three times more likely to be injured at work than adults.
- Every year almost six thousand 15 to 24 year olds have serious work related injuries requiring more than week off work.

2 Answer: false.

Accidents in the workplace are caused by many factors. Most people who have workplace accidents are not clumsy. Often accidents happen because nobody has considered that something might be dangerous and nothing is done to fix it. Sometimes people have accidents because they haven't been trained to do their job properly and safely.

3 Answer: false.

People who work in offices have accidents too. There are hazards no matter what type of work you do. There are ways jobs can be made safer by eliminating, isolating and minimising hazards so there is less risk of getting injured. We will talk about ways we can do this later.

4 Answer: true.

The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 has special rules for all employers and employees about keeping workplaces healthy and safe.

The purpose of this session is look at six steps to a safer and healthier workplace.

**The first step we will look at is identifying hazards.**

# 1 Identify

Choose one of the following jobs and spend 3 minutes writing down things you think might be dangerous in that work.

petrol station attendant  
supermarket worker  
secretary

farm/horticulture worker  
kitchen hand  
baby sitter

The words in the box below might help you.

**DUST** heat **COLD** *vapours* liquids  
fumes tripping hazards *NOISE* electrical  
Work station layout HOURS OF WORK  
**Gases** Stress **Pressure** *LIGHTING*  
Access Repetitive tasks **INSECTS**  
Viruses VENTILATION Posture  
**SHIFT WORK** **KNIVES** *Lifting*  
Computer screens MOVING VEHICLES  
Detergents *Chemicals* Personal safety

## ① *Identify*

### *Commentary*

*⌘ Presenter to allow time for participants to report on hazards they identified.*

The first step towards a healthy and safe workplace is to identify hazards.

A hazard is something unsafe or unhealthy that has or might cause people harm. You could say it is “an accident waiting to happen”, but, by taking steps to control the hazard, you can reduce the chance of being injured.

The Health and Safety in Employment Act says that employers must take all practicable steps to control significant hazards in the workplace.

There are three key ways this can be done which we will discuss in turn:

- Eliminate
- Isolate
- Minimise.

## **② Eliminate**

Once hazards have been identified, employers must take all possible steps to *eliminate* significant hazards from the workplace.



## **③ Isolate**

Sometimes it is not possible to eliminate all significant hazards from the workplace. In this case they must be isolated by your employer. This means separating you from the hazard.



## **④ Minimise**

Sometimes it may not be possible for your employer to eliminate or isolate a hazard. Hazards that can't be eliminated or isolated have to be minimised as much as possible.

## **② Eliminate**

### *Commentary*

The second step to a healthy and safe workplace is for employers to eliminate significant hazards in the workplace.

For example:

- Replacing a fraying electrical cord.
- Fixing a broken ladder.

## **③ Isolate**

### *Commentary*

Sometimes employers are not able to eliminate all significant hazards from the workplace. In this case, your employer must isolate them. This means separating you from the hazard.

For example:

- Putting noisy machinery in a separate room.
- If a floor is slippery, putting warning signs in place until it is fixed.

## **④ Minimise**

### *Commentary*

Sometimes it may not be possible for your employer to eliminate or isolate a hazard. In this case they have to minimise as much as possible.

For example:

- Washing hands before handling food.
- If you have to work near noisy machinery, wearing earmuffs will minimise the risk of damaging your hearing.

## ***Activity***

Look at the list of hazards you wrote earlier. Spend two minutes and write down how two of them could be eliminated, isolated or minimised.

 ***Presenter to allow time for discussion.***

## **5** *Train*

The Health and Safety in Employment Act says your employer has a duty to show you how to do your job properly and safely.

This means:

- 1 Employers have a duty to provide training so you can do your job safely.
- 2 Employers must make sure you are properly supervised when doing your job.

## **5 Train**

### *Commentary*

The fifth step to a healthy and safe workplace is to train.

The law says your employer has a duty to show you how to do your job properly and safely. This includes two things:

1 Employers have a duty to provide training so you can do your job safely.

This means your employer must:

- Tell and show you any hazards you will be exposed to in your job and how to avoid being injured by them.
- Show you how to minimise your exposure to hazards.
- Ensure that you have the skills and experience to do the job.
- Show you what to do in an emergency. For example:
  - a) How to switch off machinery in an emergency.
  - b) The location of fire exits and how to exit safely in an emergency.
  - c) Where fire extinguishers and other safety equipment is stored.

2 Employers must make sure you are properly supervised when doing your job.

## **6** *Organise*

The sixth step to a healthy and safe workplace is to organise.

Good organisation is one of the best ways you can prevent injuries to yourself and others at work.

This involves three things:

- Getting involved in the planning of health and safety procedures in your workplace.
- Taking responsibility for your actions.
- Acting immediately if you think anyone in your workplace is in danger.

## 6 Organise

### Commentary

#### *Getting involved in planning health and safety procedures*

Employers must provide reasonable opportunities for employees to participate in ongoing processes for the improvement of health and safety, and employees are expected to actively participate in health and safety matters.

If an employer has fewer than 30 employees, and one or more of those employees requires the development of an employee participation system, then a system must be developed.

If an employer has 30 or more employees, an employee participation system must be developed.

#### *Taking responsibility for your actions:*

The Health and Safety in Employment Act says that you are responsible for your own actions. You can be prosecuted if you create a hazard or cause other people injury at work. So, take care of yourself and your workmates.

#### *Acting immediately when you see danger:*

If you think you are in danger at any time, or that your employer is not obeying the law:

- Discuss the problem with a workmate you trust.
- Talk to a workplace health and safety committee representative.
- Talk to your supervisor. Tell them you feel unsafe.
- Ring your union or talk to your union delegate.
- Contact the Occupational Health and Safety Service (OSH). They make sure people obey the requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act and can prosecute people who break the law.

**Remember** the Health and Safety in Employment Act says you have a right to refuse unsafe work. This means that if you think you risk injury because a task you are required to do at work is unsafe; the law says you have a right to refuse to do it.

# *After an injury*

If you are injured at work or you think your job is affecting your health:

1. Tell your supervisor at once.
2. Your employer must provide first aid.
3. Your employer must ensure the hazard causing injury is controlled.
4. Make sure the accident is recorded in the workplace “accident register”.
5. If it is serious, your employer must report it to OSH.

## *Accident compensation*

If you require time away from work to recover from an injury, the Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Corporation (ACC) can help you. You may be entitled to:

- 80% of your earning paid to you for the weeks you are away from work.
- Doctors visits and physiotherapy where required partially paid for by ACC.

## *After an injury*

### *Commentary*

If you are injured at work or your work is affecting your health:

1. Tell your supervisor at once:
2. Your employer should arrange first aid and any other medical treatment if it is required.
3. Your employer should make sure that the hazard that affected you is controlled so nobody else is injured.
4. Make sure your accident is recorded in your workplace's accident register. The law says all employer must keep a record of any workplace accidents that happen.
5. If your injury is serious, your employer must report it to OSH.

## *Accident compensation*

### *Commentary*

If you are unable to work because of a serious work injury, you may need some time off work. You may also be entitled to be paid accident compensation while you are away from work.

If you want to claim accident compensation, you and the doctor or hospital that first treated your injury must fill in a *Claim for Cover* form.

If your claim is accepted you will be paid 80% of your earnings until you are able to return. Your employer will pay the first week and ACC will pay the weeks that follow.

You may also be entitled to a partial refund on doctors visits and any physiotherapy you have.

The most important thing you can do is concentrate on getting better and make a return to work. Sometimes a gradual return to work is best.

# *Case study - Boston Fish Factory*

Jenny has been hired by Mr Boston to work in his fish factory after school for two hours work each day. Her duties include cleaning cutting machines, cleaning conveyors and scrubbing floors.

On her first day at work Jenny meets Mr Boston in his office. He explains all the tasks she is required to do.

Mr Boston explains that the blades on the cutting machine are very sharp and to be careful.

Mr Boston also tells Jenny to never touch the controls on the conveyor machinery because should she switch them on, there could be an accident.

Mr Boston asks Jenny to report to him at the end of the day so he can inspect her work.

**Do you think there is anything Mr Boston could have done differently on Jenny's first day.**

## *Case study - Boston Fish Factory*

### *Commentary*

#### ***Presenter to allow time for discussion.***

Jenny's new job involves tasks that have a number of hazards.

Mr Boston told Jenny to be careful, but he did not show her how to do the job properly and safely.

Employers have a duty to ensure that staff are trained in health and safety.

In this case Mr Boston should:

- Ensure Jenny is properly trained so that she can do her job safely. Instead of telling her that machinery is dangerous she should be shown how to use it safely. For example: Jenny is told never to turn on the controls of the conveyor. To ensure this never happens her employer should have a lockout procedure in place to prevent anyone in the factory turning on the machinery while it is being cleaned.
- Ensure Jenny has the correct safety equipment for her job. This might include gloves, overalls and solid shoes.
- Make sure Jenny knows what to do in an emergency. This includes exiting the building in an emergency and the location of fire extinguishers in case of fire.
- Jenny should also be properly supervised while she is carrying out her work. Notice that Mr Boston simply left her alone and asked that she report to him at the end of the day.

## *Case study - Moira's Deli*

Pia works for Pere and his wife Moira at Moira's Deli. Together, the three of them work from 7am until 6pm five days a week.

Pia finds the work very tiring. Lately business has been even busier and Pia is finding it difficult to keep up and constantly feels tired.

On a particularly busy day, Pia has been slicing bacon with the bacon slicer all morning. Her hands are tired and aching and she is having difficulty staying awake. Just before lunch she accidentally slices her finger.

Moira takes Pia to a nearby medical centre.

**Is there anything that could have done to prevent this accident?**

## *Case study - Moira's Deli*

### *Commentary*

#### ***Presentor to allow time for discussion.***

*What could have been done to prevent this accident?*

Pia was expected to work long hours. As her job got busier, she simply could not keep up. Fatigue is a hazard that should be identified and controlled by employers. In this case Pere and Moira could have:

- a) Reduced Pia's working hours.
- b) Employed extra staff to make her job easier.
- c) Made sure she had adequate breaks.
- d) Shared the work more evenly between them.

Pia could have told her employers that she felt tired and unable to keep up. They may have been completely unaware that she was having trouble coping and may have rectified problem if they had known.

Pia's hands were aching because she had been using the bacon slicer all morning without a break. People who do repetitive tasks like this risk getting an injury called occupational overuse syndrome (OOS). It is also called repetitive strain injury (RSI). To lower the risk of an OOS injury occurring, employers can:

- Make sure the job fits the worker. For example making sure the bench is the right height and, obtaining a slicer designed so that you cannot touch the blade.
- Make sure a repetitive task is rotated among other workers or ensure workers do different tasks to break up their day.
- Make sure workers take regular breaks. I.e. taking a small break every 3 minutes and relax your muscles for 10 seconds, and take a rest break every hour for 10 - 12 minutes.

This injury can occur to the neck, fingers, hands, shoulders, back and elbows depending on the type of repetitive work. Types of work where people are at risk are, key board operators, packaging workers, assembly workers, mail sorters, kitchen workers, cleaners, carpenters and metal polishers.

# *Case study - Wilson's Grocery Shop*

Ratu has been working at Wilson's Grocery Shop after school for six months. It is a big store with 30 full and part-time staff.

Last week Ratu's friend Steve sprained his ankle when he fell off an unstable ladder while stacking shelves.

Steve was very angry because he had been complaining about the ladder to his boss Mrs Harper for several weeks. Now Steve has to have two weeks off work on ACC until his ankle is better.

Mrs Harper asks Ratu to stack the shelves while Steve is away. Ratu tells her the ladder needs fixing and he doesn't want to because he might get injured.

Mrs Harper tells him to just do it or he will get into trouble.

**Is there anything Ratu can do?**

## *Case study - Wilson's Grocery Shop*

### *Commentary*

#### ***Presenter to allow time for discussion.***

The Health and Safety in Employment Act says that you have a right to refuse unsafe work. If Ratu is concerned about his safety he has a right to refuse to stack shelves using the unstable ladder until it is fixed.

If Ratu needs support he can also get help from:

- A representative on his workplace health and safety committee.
- His union delegate.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Service (OSH).

# *Information and help*

**Talk to your union. Some unions you can join are:**

- Service and Food Workers Union of Aotearoa
- New Zealand Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union
- PSA (New Zealand Public Service Association)
- New Zealand Dairy Workers Union
- Meat and Related Trades Workers Union of Aotearoa
- New Zealand Meat Workers and Related Trades Union
- Rail and Maritime Transport Union
- Transport and General Workers Union
- Central Amalgamated Workers Union (AWUNZ)
- New Zealand Waterfront Workers Union
- New Zealand Nurses Organisation
- NZEI: Te Rui Roa (NZ Educational Institute)
- FinSec (Finance Sector Union)
- Tertiary Institutes Allied Staff Association (TIASA)
- New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union
- Flight Attendants & Related Services Association (FARSA)
- New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA)
- ASTE - Te Hau Takitini O Aotearoa (Association of Staff in Tertiary Education)
- Association of University Staff (AUS)
- New Zealand Writers Guild
- Association of Salaried Medical Specialists (ASMS).

**The Young Workers Resource Centre.**

**The Occupational Safety and Health Service (OSH).**

**The Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Corporation (ACC).**

## *Information and help*

### *Commentary*

#### *Unions:*

Your union can give you information and help about keeping healthy and safe at work. Join a union if you don't belong to one. Their phone numbers and addresses are in the phone book.

For example:

The Service and Food Workers Union represent many young people in all sorts of jobs like: kitchen hands, cleaners, cinema workers, supermarket workers and shop assistants.

The Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union represents people who work in engineering workshops, factories and journalists.

#### *The Young Workers Resource Centre*

The Young Workers Resource Centre is based in Hamilton and is especially for working young people. They can help you if you are having problems at work and need some information and advice.

#### *The Occupational Health and Safety Service (OSH)*

The Occupational Health and Safety Service or "OSH" can answer any queries you have about workplace health and safety. Their contact details are in the blue pages of the phone book.

#### *The Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Corporation (ACC)*

Your local branch of ACC can help you if you are injured and are unable to work. Contact details are in the blue pages of the phone book.