

## Young Workers' Guide to the Health and Safety in Employment Act

These are the core requirements under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. They apply to all workers, including new employees, and students in part-time or holiday work, or gaining work experience.

### General safety

Your employer has to “take all practicable steps” (do everything reasonably possible) to:

- Provide and maintain a safe working environment, including facilities for your safety and health
- Ensure that any plant, equipment, appliances, fittings, furniture and tools are safe for you to use
- Ensure that while you are at work you are not exposed to any hazards in or near your place of work, and
- Have procedures for dealing with emergencies that may arise at work.

Your employer should systematically identify all hazards in your workplace, and tell you about any that you might be exposed to or create.

From the hazards identified, your employer should determine which are significant. Your employer should take all practicable steps to eliminate all significant hazards.

If this isn't possible, then significant hazards should be isolated (separated from you). If it's not practicable to do either of those things, your employer should:

- Minimise the likelihood the hazard will harm you
- Ensure you have suitable protective clothing and equipment, and
- Monitor your exposure to the hazard.

### Training and supervision

Your employer should take all practicable steps to ensure you are either trained, or supervised by someone who is trained, in how to carry out your work safely.

### Unsafe work

You have the right to refuse work that would be likely to cause you serious harm.

### Monitoring your health at work

If it's necessary for your health to be monitored at work, your employer should seek your informed consent before any monitoring begins. You should be given the results of any monitoring of you or your place of work. This information should be given in a way which does not reveal your health status to any of your colleagues.

A health and safety inspector from the Department of Labour may not look at your health records without your permission. However, a departmental medical practitioner may see your records.

## Employee participation

Employers have to provide reasonable opportunities for employees to participate in improving health and safety. This is so all people with relevant knowledge and expertise can be involved. It ensures that when employers make decisions that affect employees and their work, they have information from employees who face the health and safety issues in practice.

## Your responsibility as an employee

You are expected to take all practicable steps to ensure you are not harmed at work, and that you do not harm anyone else by either your actions or your failure to take action at work.

If you are using tools, appliances, machinery, etc. at work, you must take all practicable steps to ensure that people in or near your place of work are not harmed by these items.

## Age limits on dangerous work

Under age 15 there is some work you can't do. See factsheet Youth Age Restrictions on Dangerous Work. From 1 April 2009, these rules also apply to young people doing contract work.

## Further information

If you are unsure about any of your rights at work, visit [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz) or call the Department of Labour's Contact Centre during business hours on 0800 20 90 20.

This information is a guide only and may not be accurate for all situations. It should not be used as a substitute for legal or other expert advice.

