

Loss

Control



FARMERS

Information Bulletin

Inexperienced Workers

According to recent U. S. Department of Labor report, a large percentage of injuries in the workplace involve young and/or inexperienced workers with less than one year of experience on the job. More than half of these workers were employed for less than one month, and one of every eight of these injuries occurred during the first day of work.

Young and inexperienced workers present a major challenge to managers and supervisors to ensure that these workers do not end up on the injury statistic list right from the start. Management is responsible to reduce the potential of injury for new and inexperienced workers.

To help the young worker, Federal child labor laws limit work hours for teens and prohibit workers under 18 from certain occupations such as using dangerous chemicals, using power driven machinery (food mixers, bread slicing and wrapping machines, paper products, and wood working), or using punch presses, rolling and bending machines, shearing machines and all wrecking/demolition jobs or roofing work.

When a young or inexperienced worker is hired, it is most important that training begin immediately. These workers should be trained on the specific job function that they will perform. This training must include how to safely perform the job. The inexperienced worker needs training on personal protection, proper lifting, working with or around electricity, and slips and falls.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) protects the worker's body parts from possible harm. Employers are responsible for providing each employee with appropriate and properly fitted PPE. Employees should consult their supervisor if their PPE doesn't fit properly or training has not been provided.

PPE could include steel toed shoes or boots and slip resistant shoes; safety hats or helmets; safety glasses, goggles, or face shields; gloves including cut resistant gloves; hearing protection; and/or respiratory devices.

Each work place has unique work hazards and exposures and the PPE provided to the inexperienced worker must be applicable to the work environment and work hazards. Many young and inexperienced workers may show up for work wearing a wide variety of jewelry, long hair or loose clothing. Supervisors must act responsibly and have the new worker remove jewelry, wear appropriate hair covering and change to appropriate clothing appropriate to the working conditions.

Lifting presents a significant hazard for the new or inexperienced worker. An estimated eight out of every 10 people suffer a back injury during their lifetime. Proper lifting techniques need to be provided to these inexperienced workers to reduce the potential of these types of injuries.

Electricity can result in fatality accidents. Many inexperienced workers are unaware of the danger associated with working with electrical equipment or around sources of electricity. Faulty equipment is a major cause of electrical injuries. New employees must be instructed not to use faulty equipment and to report it to a supervisor immediately.

Wet environments are especially dangerous. Precautions must be taken to insure that Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters are installed and in working condition when workers are using electrical machinery or equipment, or working near sources of electrical energy while working in wet environments.

Every worker is responsible for keeping his or her work place safe from trip and fall hazards. Most inexperienced workers have never had to have this level of responsibility and must be instructed of the importance of good housekeeping to accident reduction efforts.

They must be instructed to inform their supervisor of unsafe conditions that could result in a trip and fall injury and if possible to correct the situation or protect the area until the hazard can be corrected.

Management and the new and/or inexperienced worker must be a partnership in the workplace.

Management has the right to expect the inexperienced worker to be efficient and productive but the company has the responsibility to ensure that these employees are receiving proper training and have supervisors that understand the transition between being a young/inexperienced worker and a fully productive experienced worker.