

# YOUNG WORKER SAFETY:

By Andrea Foster Mack and Stacy Riley

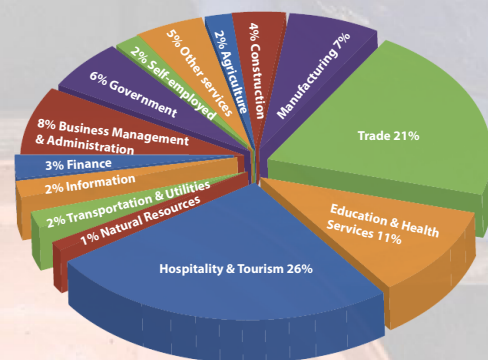
**A** young worker is dead after he fell from a farm tractor he was operating. Highway patrol stated the 15-year old lost his balance and fell from the tractor and was run over by a trailer. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

The need for teacher advocacy in safety education for students has never been greater. Every nine minutes, a teen in the United States is injured in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> With teens spending the majority of their time in schools, instructors have a great opportunity to make sure that students receive proper training to transition the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom into the workforce. In 2010,

there were approximately 17.5 million young workers representing 13 percent of the workforce for our country (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Knowing their worker rights, being able to recognize hazards and safety principles, and understanding the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) regulations can potentially help students work safely.

Based on current statistics, young workers, ages 16 to 24, continue to have the highest rates of work-related injuries and illnesses; greater than any other age group. According to the 2013 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index, "The most disabling workplace injuries and illnesses in 2011 amounted to \$55.4 bil-

FIGURE 1. Young Workers, Ages 16–24, by Industry



Summer Youth Labor Force News Release 2013,  
United States Department of Labor



# Are Your Students and Classrooms Prepared?

lion in direct U.S. workers compensation costs. This translates into more than a billion dollars spent by businesses each week on the most disabling injuries.”<sup>3</sup> It is our collective duty to ensure that our students do not become injury statistics.

## At Risk: Why?

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 80 percent of high school students will have a job prior to their graduation, which places these young men and women in a position to be at risk in the workplace.<sup>4</sup> For many students, a job can mean moving closer toward adulthood, gaining

more independence or learning skills like ethical decision-making, money handling and interpersonal communication. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, young workers are at risk partly due to the various types of employment opportunities they seek, and they may be at an increased risk of injury and illness due to a lack of safety training and experience in the workplace. Because such a large percentage of students are entering the workforce, it is of the utmost importance that young workers are prepared to identify and respond to workplace safety hazards.

Young workers should know that, as employees, they have certain rights. By

law, it is an employer’s responsibility to provide a safe work environment for employees, as well as give training about the risks and hazards associated with a job. It is an employee’s right to receive training on the proper use and requirements of personal protective equipment, including but not limited to: hard hats, safety goggles, ear plugs and gloves.

It is also within students’ rights to earn at least the federal minimum wage for their state. If your students are under the age of 18, there may be a limit to the maximum number of hours they are allowed to work or a restriction on the type of work and equipment they may work with. These young employees should

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feel confident and able to ask questions without fear of ridicule if instructions are unclear or if something in the workplace looks unsafe or is putting others at risk.

Questions your students should ask an employer include:

- What are the physical demands of my job?
- What are my work hours?
- What kind of safety gear will I need to wear?
- What workplace hazards should I be aware of?
- Is there a safety and health training program?

### Why Implement OSHA Training in the Classroom?

Often, teens begin their first job while they are still enrolled in high school, looking to become an apprentice, or they have joined an organization that requires hands-on experience for competition-based activities. An industry-recognized credential has the potential to improve a resume and increase the probability

of receiving a pay increase. Many states require work permits or certifications that indicate employees have received safety training. Many instructors want to provide an additional practical and informative safety education program for their students, but do not have the funds or simply do not know there are options for them that include industry-recognized credentialing. Some teachers may be at a disadvantage in how to provide this safety education for their students and wonder how they can feel confident in the abilities and knowledge their students are receiving.

For the past 11 years, CareerSafe has been working with educators and career and technical education (CTE) organizations to provide safety training for students in secondary and postsecondary education across all 16 Career Clusters.<sup>®</sup> As the largest provider of online OSHA 10-Hour courses by volume, our mission at CareerSafe is to educate young workers on how to lower the risks associated with workplace hazards, and provide them with the knowledge to be informed and conscious of the workplace around them. We also provide information regarding workers' rights

and how to file a confidential complaint should the situation arise with regard to workplace safety.

CareerSafe offers both OSHA 10-Hour General Industry and OSHA 10-Hour Construction Industry courses, and we will launch the first-ever OSHA 10-Hour General Industry (Agriculture) course in the 2014–2015 school year. Our interactive, youth-to-youth online courses address the different learning styles of young workers with scenario-based activities, case studies and simulations. By the end of 2015, our goal is to have 1,000,000 students begin to “StartSafe” and “StaySafe” by pledging to make safety a priority with our A Million Safer Campaign. Currently, CareerSafe has trained more than 500,000 students in safety training courses. We want to give students every opportunity to enhance their CTE identity and skills with a knowledgeable understanding of workplace safety.

You may be wondering how educators around the country are implementing CareerSafe safety training into their classrooms. The course information and supplemental tools are flexible and can be used as a stand-alone safety curriculum or as part of a safety unit for a classroom. Based on interviews and user feedback, CareerSafe courses have been easily incorporated into classroom curricula, often as part of a safety training unit or homework. Other teachers have elected to use the CareerSafe OSHA 10-Hour training as a major project, the subjects of the modules as a major project, or the subjects of the modules as topics for a research paper. How CareerSafe is implemented into classrooms and lab settings is entirely at the discretion of the teacher, but we hope that the ease with which it can be applied gives teachers the freedom to use CareerSafe training in a way that works best for them.

### Are Your Classrooms Prepared?

Not only do we want your students educated in workplace safety, but it is also an instructor's responsibility to lead by example. Every instructor wants to provide a safe and rewarding program for their students, but how do you as educa-

### In-class Safety Activity

Incorporate safety activities to give students hands-on safety training throughout the CareerSafe 10-hour training modules

#### Bloodborne Pathogens Learning Activity

Students will learn to safely remove gloves contaminated with fluids.

##### SUPPLIES:

Gloves  
Large mixing bowl  
Cherry/strawberry ice cream syrup  
Newspaper  
Trash bags

##### PROCEDURE:

1. Pour syrup in mixing bowl
2. Cover all tabletops with multiple layers of newspaper
3. Have each student put on a pair of gloves
4. Instructor takes bowl with syrup to each student and has the student put fingers up to first knuckle into the syrup
5. Instruct the students to remove the gloves without getting any syrup on their skin
6. Lead a discussion about how difficult it is to remove contaminated gloves
7. Demonstrate how to safely remove gloves
8. Repeat glove removal
9. Put gloves and newspaper in trash bags; use regulated red trash bag if possible

##### INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

- Instructor *must* practice before demonstrating to students
- School nurse may provide gloves
- Students will be licking syrup from their skin after first removal effort
- Removal of gloves is easier if excess syrup is wiped off with paper towels before removal of gloves
- Ask school nurse to discuss glove use with bloodborne pathogens

tors confront the challenges of program requirements, innovative technologies and safety education in accordance with state and federal regulations?

The problem is that for so long, innovative technologies and program requirements have taken the majority of focus within all classrooms and labs, whereas safety education for teachers and students has taken a back seat. Most teachers have been left to develop their own safety training program in order to establish a safe culture within their individual classrooms and labs. While extremely helpful, many of these individual safety training programs lack programmatic consistency, documentation, administrative sign-off, abatement strategies and validation.

Ask yourself:

- Does my safety program challenge participants to learn more about OSHA's safety standards in order to provide the leadership necessary to create a safe environment within the classroom, lab and school setting?
- Does my safety curriculum develop an individual programmatic safety portfolio and implementation plan for local approval?

- Does my safety plan help develop an inclusive culture that emphasizes the importance of lab and workplace safety and OSHA's role within the school environment?

Did you answer yes to all these questions? If so, it sounds like you have implemented a well-rounded, documented safety training program. If you answered no, however, let's take a look at how the CareerSafe Professional Development Program (CPDP) can take your classroom's curriculum beyond the basic safety test and into a place where you're in control of your classroom's safety training program.

The CPDP was created for educators, administrators and other individuals within the educational community to enhance workplace and classroom safety awareness. The goal: to better equip education professionals with the tools and resources necessary for increased safety orientation in the classroom, and as a result, improve the learning experience for students. Through the program, educators will have an opportunity to earn their federal OSHA 10-Hour industry-recognized credential and utilize those tools to help facilitate effective integration of the OSHA 10-Hour training into their classroom curriculum. The

CPDP also offers programmatic safety checklists based on the Career Clusters, which provide step-by-step instructions on how to analyze the physical classroom setting to make it a safe and healthy area for students. The program not only establishes an inclusive safety culture that emphasizes the importance of classroom and lab safety, but it also provides each educator with an individualized safety portfolio and implementation plan. At the completion of the program, educators will receive up to 25 hours of individual school-sponsored professional development credits that can be applied to the annual state requirement.

The goal is to prepare these young workers for a safe and prosperous future. Don't let your students become a safety statistic. **Tech**

**Andrea Foster Mack** is the director of outreach for CareerSafe Online, and she is an authorized federal OSHA trainer and certified safety and health official. She can be reached at [andrea.foster-mack@careersafeonline.com](mailto:andrea.foster-mack@careersafeonline.com).

**Stacy Riley** is the marketing communications analyst for CareerSafe Online. She can be reached at [stacy.riley@careersafeonline.com](mailto:stacy.riley@careersafeonline.com).

## ENDNOTES

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## EXPLORE MORE

To learn more about CareerSafe programs, visit [www.careersafeonline.com](http://www.careersafeonline.com). Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter to stay up to date with CareerSafe.

For more information on additional rights of young workers and responsibilities of employers in regard to young workers, please visit: [www.osha.gov/youngworkers](http://www.osha.gov/youngworkers).

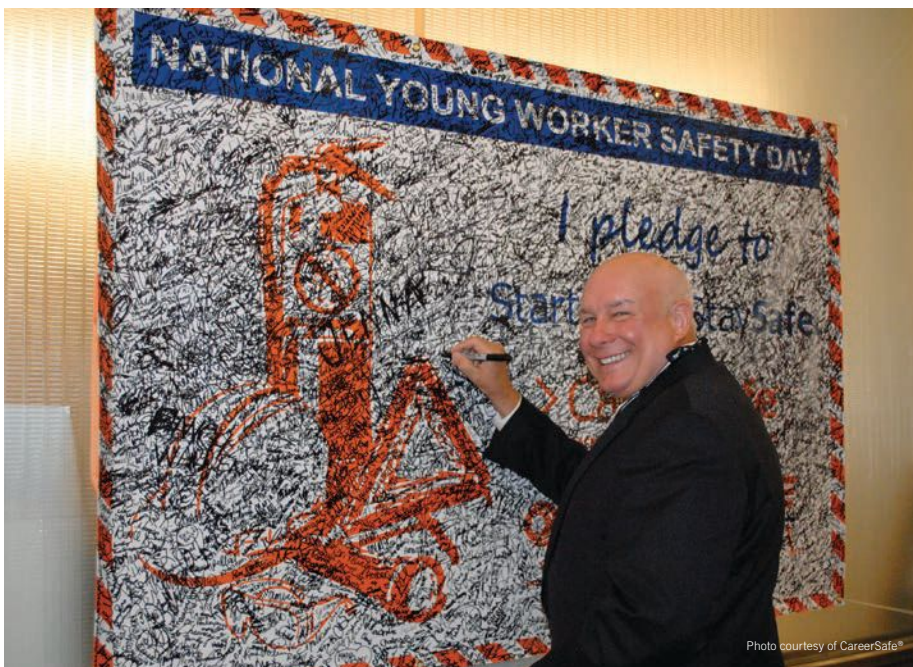


Photo courtesy of CareerSafe®

Larry Teverbaugh, founder and CEO of CareerSafe, signs the pledge for StartSafe and StaySafe.