

## 3 MAKING THE JOB SAFER

### PURPOSE

This activity teaches young workers about the importance of hazard control in reducing the risk of an occupational injury. Young workers problem solve by using the hierarchy of controls and the “speak up” theme.

### ACTIVITY TIME

Approximately 15 minutes

### PREPARATION

- Handouts are included in the activity book on pages 3–5. Alternatively, you can print the handouts from the website. The handouts can be found at: **[www.promotingusafetyhealth.com](http://www.promotingusafetyhealth.com)** Click on "Start the Conversation Activities," then find the "Making the Job Safer" activity and click on the "Handout" link. Print one handout for each attending staff member, letter size, double sided.
- Print PUSH Cards.

### DIRECTIONS

Supervisor reads out loud

**Supervisor reads out loud**

#### SUPERVISOR READS QUESTION

- ✘ *Do not read out loud*



**OREGON HEALTHY  
WORKFORCE CENTER**

A NIOSH CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

PUSH is an Oregon Healthy Workforce Center Project funded through the NIOSH Total Worker Health Center of Excellence Grant U19OH10154.

© Oregon Health & Science University and University of Iowa, 2016

## BACKGROUND

Today, we are going to discuss how to prevent workplace injuries. Young workers are a vulnerable group. **In the United States, about 90 young workers are hurt on the job every hour—that is one injury every 45 seconds!**

Some injuries are minor, like a cut or a sprain. Others are more serious, such as losing a finger, an arm, or even death. A work injury can limit what you are able to do in the future.

**There are many ways to prevent workplace injuries, but the best way is to remove the hazard altogether.**

For example, glass bottles aren't allowed on swimming pool decks.

### CAN SOMEONE TELL ME WHY THAT WOULD BE?

✘ *Let staff answer.*

**Answer:** because glass can break and cut people that are walking around with bare feet on the pool deck.

Great answers, glass bottles are hazards, which means they have the potential to injure you. Keeping glass bottles off the pool deck is an example of a hazard being removed—meaning the hazard no longer exists in the workplace.

### CAN ANYONE THINK OF OTHER WAYS WE HAVE REMOVED A HAZARD COMPLETELY FROM A WORKPLACE?

✘ *Let staff answer.*

Other examples can include: making it illegal to smoke in workplaces, using machinery that is quieter and doesn't damage hearing (e.g. electric lawnmower vs. gas-powered lawnmower).

**If you can't completely eliminate a hazard, there are several other ways to make the job safer including:**

**Provide a substitute for the hazard.**

For example, swapping harmful chemicals for non-toxic alternatives.

**Engineering the hazard out of the workplace. In other words, modify conditions in the work space to minimize or eliminate hazards.**

An example of this is buying machinery with protective guards to keep your fingers away from sharp blades, or designing an office space to include standing desks so people don't have to sit for the entire work day.

### CAN ANYONE THINK OF EXAMPLES OF ENGINEERING CONTROLS IN OUR WORKPLACE?

✘ *Let staff answer.*

**Creating policies. No-smoking policies can protect your lung health. Policies that limit cell phone use can prevent you from being distracted at work.**

### WHAT ARE SOME POLICIES IN OUR WORKPLACE THAT HELP KEEP US SAFE?

✘ *Let staff answer.*

**Personal protective equipment (PPE).**

**Sometimes you can't completely get rid of the hazard, but your employer can make the job safer by providing equipment that protects staff from an injury.** Examples are: gloves, hard hats, and respirators.

You should always wear PPE when it is recommended, but remember that PPE is the least effective solution because it doesn't minimize the hazard itself and must be used constantly and correctly.

**Remember, your employer is responsible for identifying and eliminating the hazards, providing appropriate personal protective equipment, and making good workplace policies to protect workers.** You have the right to ask questions or speak up if you are asked to do something unsafe.

## ACTIVITY

- ✘ *Distribute "Make the Job Safer" handout or ask employees to turn to pages 3–5 in their activity workbooks.*

Let's think about ways to make the workplace safer. On the back of your handout, there are stories about workplace injuries. Read the story and answer the questions.

- ✘ *Give the staff time to answer the question and then discuss the scenarios as a group. Answers are listed below.*

---

**ANSWERS | Story 1:** Marcello is 17 years old and works as a cashier at a local convenience store. Marcello sometimes helps close the store at night but feels anxious about working late. Other store clerks in the neighborhood have been robbed at gunpoint and Marcello is fearful it could happen at his store.

### WHAT IS THE HAZARD IN THIS CASE?

Robbery / violence

### WHAT SHOULD MARCELLO DO IF HE FEELS VULNERABLE?

Speak up to his boss; ask his employer what they are doing to protect him from violent crime

Request that his schedule is changed so he doesn't have to close

Talk to his boss about what to do in a robbery situation

### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT MARCELLO'S BOSS CAN MAKE HIS JOB SAFER?

Provide an example of at least two types of solutions (remove the hazard, policy, engineering control, protective equipment).

- ✘ *Use your discretion.*

Some examples include:

**Policy:** More than two people must work during closing shift hours.

**Policy:** Keep only a small amount of cash in the store at any time. Post this policy on the door.

**Engineering:** Work space modification: Install bright lights outside the building

**Engineering:** Work space modification: Install bulletproof glass in front of the register

**Engineering:** Work space modification: Install security cameras or security guards

---

**ANSWERS | Story 2:** 20-year old Shia worked on a construction site digging holes. On a very hot day, Shia started to feel dizzy; he had been given no breaks and only had one bottle of water for the entire day. He wanted to ask his supervisor for a break to get more water but none of his coworkers were complaining. Later that day, Shia became very disoriented, dizzy, and confused. He soon passed out from heat exhaustion.

### WHAT IS THE HAZARD IN THIS STORY?

Heat

### WHAT SHOULD SHIA HAVE DONE TO PREVENT HEAT EXHAUSTION?

Shia should speak up to his boss at the first sign of symptoms or illness.

Shia has a right to take breaks and has the right to speak up if he feels he is in danger.

Shia should have plenty of water, take regular breaks, wear clothing to protect himself from the sun (hat long sleeves), and seek shade.

### WHAT SHOULD SHIA'S BOSS HAVE DONE TO MAKE THE JOB SAFER?

**Policy:** Encourage an environment that values safety, where staff are encouraged to speak up and put safety first

**Policy:** Enforce regular breaks for staff

**Policy:** Limit outdoor work and exposure to harsh elements like heat. Dig in the coolest parts of the day (early morning or evening)

**Engineering Control:** Use machines to dig holes

**Personal protective equipment:** Provide a shade hat, cooling vest, hydration pack

**ANSWERS | Story 3:** Jamal works in a retail store selling brand name athletic shoes. One day Jamal was busy helping customers and had to get several pairs of shoes from the back room. Jamal left the stock room with a stack of shoe boxes so high, he couldn't see anything in front of him. He tripped over a pair of shoes on the ground and fell awkwardly on his wrist. At the hospital, he found out he had fractured his wrist in two places and it would require surgery.

**WHAT IS THE HAZARD IN THIS STORY?**

Shoes on the floor that Jamal tripped over, or overstacking shoe boxes to the point his view was obstructed.

**WHAT COULD HAVE JAMAL DONE TO PREVENT THE TRIP AND FALL?**

**Policy:** Jamal could have carried fewer boxes so he could see the shoes on the ground and prevent tripping.

**Policy:** Jamal could make more than one trip to the stock room so he could see in front of him.

**Policy:** Jamal could have used a cart or dolly to carry multiple boxes of shoes.

**HOW COULD JAMAL'S EMPLOYER HAVE PREVENTED THE ACCIDENT?**

**Engineering:** Stock of shoes could be stored below the shoe model on the store floor so staff don't have to carry so many boxes

**Policy:** Use a cart if you need to deliver more than two pairs of shoes to customers

We learned today that there are many ways to make your job safer, from talking to your supervisor to removing the hazard altogether. Being aware of the safety policies at your workplace and potential job hazards can help you make safer decisions at work to prevent injuries. **Remember that it is your supervisor's responsibility to keep workplaces safe, but it is your responsibility to follow workplace policies and use any safety equipment that is required.**

**PUSH FORWARD**

✘ *Pass out PUSH cards.*

On your card is a link to the Promoting U through Safety and Health page ([www.promotingusafetyhealth.com](http://www.promotingusafetyhealth.com)). If you follow this page you can learn about other ways to stay safe at home and at work.

# 3 MAKING THE JOB SAFER HANDOUTS

