



Train. Protect. Prevent.

## YOUNG WORKERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Did you know in 2010 110,000 young workers were injured and 328 were killed in the workplace? Most of these injuries and deaths were preventable and could have been stopped through proper training and knowledge of safe work practices. Young workers are considered those new to the workplace, even up to the age of 24. They can be an asset to the workforce however it may be their first time operating a certain piece of equipment or first time on the job.

Young workers get injured or sick on the job for many reasons, including:

- Unsafe equipment
- Inadequate supervision
- Dangerous work that is illegal or inappropriate for youth under 18
- Inadequate safety training
- Pressure to work faster
- Stressful conditions



As an employer it is your responsibility to:

- Comply and understand the state and federal child labor laws
- Ensure young workers receive the proper training to recognize hazards and stay competent in safe work practices
- Implement a buddy or mentoring system for young workers
- Encourage young workers to ask questions
- Ensure equipment used and operated by young workers is both legal and safe for them to use

Case study: Two young workers (ages 14 and 19) were killed at a grain storage facility in the Midwest when they were sent into a grain bin to “walk down the corn.” The grain bin was being emptied, and the workers’ task was to break up clumps by walking on them to make the corn flow out of the bin. The workers were not provided safety harnesses, and the machinery used for evacuating the grain was running. The suction created by the flowing grain pulled them in like quicksand and suffocated them. Workers should never be inside a grain bin when it is being emptied out, because a sinkhole can form and pull down the worker in a matter of seconds. OSHA standards prohibit this dangerous practice. This company ignored that rule as well as other protective safety requirements. In addition, child labor laws made it illegal for this company to employ a 14-year-old to work in a grain silo.

Work Site Review: Hazards/Safety Suggestions

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Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Site Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Foreman/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signatures: (continue on back of sheet if necessary)

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(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced, or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness)

**Manager/Supervisor's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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