

# Protecting Young Workers

*Coordinated strategies help to raise safety awareness*

*By Mary E. Miller, Elise Handelman and Cynthia Lewis*

**I**T IS ESTIMATED that nearly 75% of the nation's teens will have a job by the time they graduate from high school. In 2004, approximately 2.2 million adolescents were in the workforce (Windau & Meyer, 2005). Unlike adult workers, young workers move in and out of employment, work part-time and do not typically work to support a family.

Nationwide, most teens work in the retail sector—primarily in restaurants and grocery stores. Many also work in service industries such as health-care, hospitality and agriculture. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 97% of employed youths worked for a wage (versus being self-employed or

family workers). While the focus of this article is on those under age 18, developmentally the same risk factors and prevention strategies presented are comparable for workers in their mid- to late-20s.

Obtaining an accurate estimate of those who are working and those who are injured is problematic since state and federal data sources differ in reporting requirements and the age range that is used in collecting or reporting the data. Also, denominator data are incomplete because the U.S. Census Bureau stopped collecting occupational data for those under age 16 in 1970. The data presented in this article provide a sample to help SH&E professionals understand the need for extra attention to adolescent and young adult workers. [In this article, the terms “youth” or “young workers” refer to the general age range of 14 to 24. Teens are considered those age 13 to 19.]

Young workers are exposed to many of the same occupational risks as their adult counterparts. For various reasons, they are more likely to be injured than adult workers. Data indicate that teens are injured at a rate at least two times higher than adults in some occupational sectors (NIOSH, 2006). Nationally, it is estimated that nearly 230,000 teens suffer work-related injuries each year, with one-third ( $n = 77,000$ ) of these seeking care in emergency rooms. In keeping with employment patterns, more than 80% of these injuries occur in the retail or service industries (NIOSH, 2003).

Work-related fatalities among this population are also of concern. Between 1992 and 2000, an average of 68 workers age 18 and younger died annually (Windau & Meyer, 2005); this decreased to 54 deaths in 2005 (BLS, 2005). Between 1993 and 2002, fatalities for workers age 14 to 15 increased 34%. Consistently, the leading causes of death are motor vehicles, agricultural machinery and homicide. As Figure 1 shows, fatal work injuries to workers under age 18

**Mary E. Miller, R.N., M.N.**, is an occupational health nurse and child labor specialist in the Employment Standards Program of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. She holds a B.S. in Community Health Planning from the University of Cincinnati, a B.S. in Nursing from Case Western Reserve University and a Master's of Nursing with a specialty in occupational and environmental health from the University of Washington. Miller is active in the Occupational Health and Safety Section of the American Public Health Association and received its Alice Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. She is also cochair of the national Young Workers' Health and Safety Network.

**Elise Handelman, R.N., M.Ed., COHN-S**, is director of OSHA's Office of Occupational Health Nursing within the agency's Directorate of Science, Technology and Medicine. In this role, she helps to write and interpret OSHA standards and guidelines; provides expertise in the development of policy; and designs and delivers outreach activities for compliance assistance. Handelman has managed the agency's Young Worker Initiative for the past 3 years.

**Cynthia Lewis, M.S.P.H.**, is the principal of Creative Safety Solutions in Santa Fe, TX. She holds a B.S. in Chemistry from MacMurray College and an M.S. in Public Health (environmental and occupational health sciences) from the University of Illinois, Chicago. Lewis is a professional member of ASSE's Gulf Coast Chapter (GCC) and chairs its Youth Worker Safety group. Lewis is also treasurer of ASSE Region III; chair of the Society's Training and Communications Branch; and a member of the Public Relations and Strategic Planning committees. In 2002, she received Safety Professional of the Year awards from GCC and Region III. In 2005, she received ASSE's Charles V. Culbertson Outstanding Volunteer Service Award.

have declined generally since the mid 1990s. However, it is too early to determine whether this decline will be sustained. Figure 2 shows that for the period 1994 to 2004, fatal work injuries among workers age 15 and older declined only modestly. The associated cost to the nation is substantial in both economic and psychological terms.

Working with the Child Labor Coalition, the National Consumers League (NCL) identified the five worst teen jobs in 2006:

- agriculture (fieldwork and processing);
- construction and work at heights
- outside helper (landscaping, groundskeeping and lawn service);
- driver/operator (forklifts, tractors and ATVs);
- traveling youth crews.

NCL claims that a young worker is injured on the job every 30 seconds and one teen dies from a workplace injury every 5 days (NCL, 2006).

### Characteristics of Young Workers

Youth are new to the world of work and their age and inexperience contributes to their increased risk for injury. During this time in their lives, they are experiencing a great deal of change, learning many new things and facing difficult challenges. Their ability to focus can be compromised. Compared to adults, adolescents have less-developed cognitive abilities, physical coordination and overall maturity, and experience a rapidly changing physiology. They often have a limited perception of danger and may engage in risk-taking behaviors as a result.

Additionally, because of their age and lack of work experience, they may not feel empowered to report concerns or fears when placed in a dangerous situation. Speaking up to an adult or a person of authority is difficult for many young workers. They often seek increased responsibilities and do not want to appear to not know what they are doing. This makes them less inclined to ask questions.

Data about occupational injuries among teens in Washington and other states are available from workers' compensation claims. Washington State has evaluated injury data among teens since the early 1990s (Miller & Kaufman, 1998). Approximately two-thirds of Washington's workers are insured for workers' compensation through the state fund administered by the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). L&I is unique as a state labor department because it houses the programs for industrial insurance, health and safety under the state plan, the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act and the wage and hour regulations including child labor. This provides a unique opportunity to identify injuries among teens, pursue coordinated enforcement activities as appropriate, and provide outreach and education for prevention.

Overall, the numbers of claims has decreased over the past decade. However many serious injuries such as fractures, concussions and amputations still occur. Workers' compensation claims are, in general, thought to underrepresent the actual number of in-

## Young Worker Characteristics

- Explore, experiment and take risks, but lack a sense of vulnerability.
- May try to do "a little more" to prove themselves.
- Desire acceptance from adults and peers, and are susceptible to peer pressure, yet want to assert their independence ("Applied Psychology," 1953).
- May perform tasks outside their usual work assignments for which they may not have received training (Bowling, Runyan, Miara et al., 1998).
- Lack experience and physical and emotional maturity needed for certain tasks.
- Lack of knowledge about work requirements and safe operating procedures for certain tasks (NIOSH, 2003).
- Lack knowledge about which work tasks are prohibited by child labor laws (Castillo, Davis & Wegman, 1999).
- Rapid growth of organ and musculoskeletal systems may make them more likely to be harmed by exposure to hazardous substances or unsafe work activities (Bruckner & Weil, 1999; Golub, 2000).
- Limited self-confidence and communication skills make it more difficult for them to effectively question or convey concerns to their supervisors.
- Lack assertiveness and may be afraid to ask questions or speak up because they are concerned about looking stupid or losing their job.
- More sleep is needed by teens than adults at a time when sleep habits and patterns may not be beneficial (Carskadon, 2004).

**Abstract:** *Young workers are a vulnerable population in need of special protections. Despite prohibitions regarding the use of certain powered equipment and machinery, young people continue to be severely injured and even killed while working with such equipment. This article presents two case reports to raise awareness regarding the need for stronger injury prevention strategies for teen workers.*

juries because many teens, parents and healthcare providers may not be aware that a workers' compensation claim can be filed for a teen's injury.

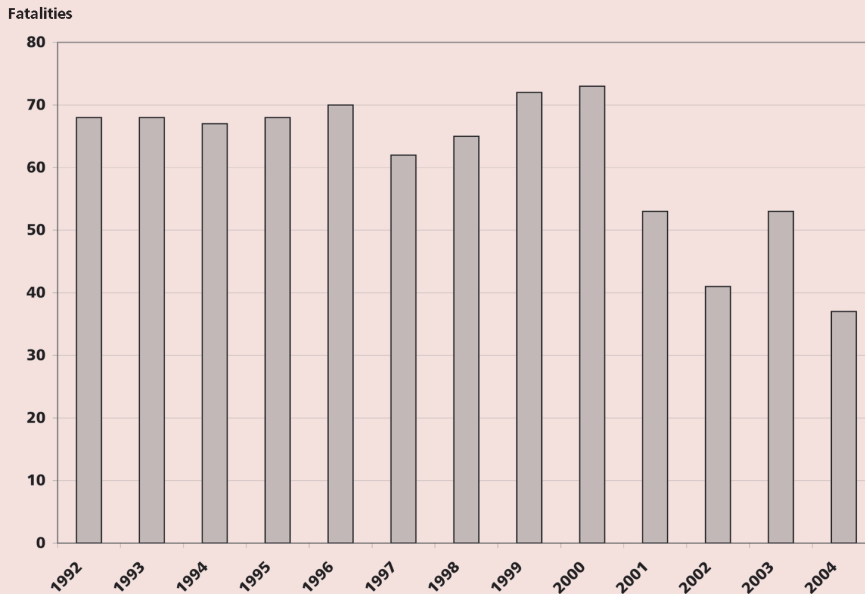
Furthermore, many teenagers work in jobs without health insurance or their parents may lack insurance coverage. Treating injuries as promptly as possible will prevent complications and limit the severity. Claims that receive medical aid alone typically will not increase employer premiums.

However, in Washington, teens tend to have a percentage of time loss claims similar to adults—indicating that they have missed at least 3 days of work. Since they do not work full time and are not typically scheduled on consecutive days, such lost time may indicate more severe injuries or at least injuries that could interfere with school and other age-appropriate activities.

Although this article focuses on injuries that resulted while teens were performing prohibited job activities, most teen injuries occur in jobs that are allowable under federal and state child labor regula-

**Figure 1**

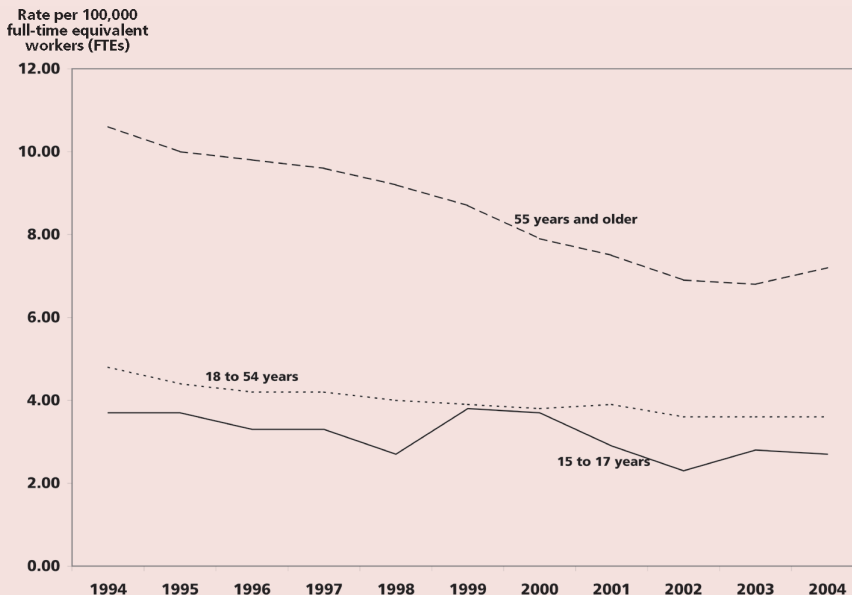
## Fatal Work Injuries to Youths Under Age 18, 1992-2004



Note. Based on Census of fatal occupational injuries: Summary, 2005, by Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Author.

**Figure 2**

## Fatal Work Injury Rates, Workers Ages 15 & Older, 1994-2004



Note. Based on Census of fatal occupational injuries: Summary, 2005, by Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Author.

tions. The federal regulations under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) have not kept pace with workplace changes related to new machinery and equipment, biologic agents and hazardous chemicals (Miller & Bush, 2004). In a 2002 report, NIOSH recommended changes to the child labor hazardous orders. Similar changes have been supported by the American Public Health Association (2002).

In addition, studies have found that existing regulations often are violated and that enforcement measures are lacking in areas such as retail, service and construction jobs, placing young workers at risk for serious injury (Runyan, Dal Santo, Schulman et al., 2006; Runyan, Schulman, Dal Santo et al., 2007).

### Youth Worker Case Studies

Careful study and investigation of incidents involving young workers can reveal lessons that can be applied to prevent similar occurrences. As noted, the characteristics of young workers put them at increased risk. Training for young workers must be accompanied by aggressive use of engineering controls and increased supervision, and they must be restricted from using dangerous machines and equipment. The following examples demonstrate the need for greater attention to this population (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003).

### Teen Fatality Involving a Forklift

Multiple young worker fatalities are attributed to forklift operations, which are found in a broad range of facilities and across numerous industries. Forklift operators are required by OSHA (2006) to complete specific training, and those under age 18 are prohibited from operating forklifts under FLSA (U.S. Department of Labor, 2001). Despite these regulations, young workers continue to die while operating forklifts (NIOSH, 2006a).

In this case—which was the company's first fatality—the employer was a small salvage lumber company that had been in business for less than 2 years. The workforce size varied, with no more than 10 employees at any one time. At the time of the incident, three employees were under age 18. Safety policies and training were unwritten, and training was conducted on the job by the owner or experienced adult workers.

On July 10, 2000, the victim, a 17-year-old male, and his 19-year-old female coworker were returning to work from a break. The victim offered his coworker a ride back to their work area on a forklift.



The forklift was a 1964 model that the owner had purchased at auction about 9 months before the incident. The machine had an overhead guard to protect the operator against contact with falling objects; however, it did not have an operator restraint system, nor did it have passenger seating. Since the forklift had no passenger seat, the coworker rode on the right side of the machine, holding on to the overhead guard.

As the two traveled to the work area, the victim jokingly said he was going to flip the machine. The victim drove the forklift for about 135 ft on a hard-packed dirt roadway. At that point, he sped up and abruptly turned left. The forklift began to tip to the right, and the coworker jumped off to the right as the forklift continued to tip. The victim was either thrown from the machine or jumped to the right.

The machine tipped, trapping both workers between the overhead guard and the ground. The victim's head was crushed. The employer called 9-1-1 and emergency personnel responded within 15 minutes. The victim died about 1 hour later. The coworker was treated for injuries to both ankles and was released from the hospital the same day.

The victim fit several profiles typical for this type of fatality. He was 17 and had completed the 11th grade in high school where he had been enrolled in a career technical program studying heavy equipment operation. He had worked for about 1 month before the incident. His normal duties included manually handling lumber. He had not been instructed in forklift operations, but he had been shown how to operate the forklift controls and was assigned to operate the machine, in violation of FLSA. He had a valid driver's license.

#### Preventive Controls

Employers should take several actions to prevent similar incidents in their workplaces:

- Provide training for safe forklift operation as required by OSHA.
- Ensure that only trained operators have access to the equipment.
- Install adequate operator restraint systems in sit-down forklifts to reduce risk in the event of a tipover, as specified by ANSL.

- Prohibit riders on any forklift that is not specifically designed for passengers.
- Comply with child labor laws that prohibit operators under the age of 18.

#### Teen Injured in Ice Auger

Severe injuries such as amputations, fractures, concussions and multiple injuries also alter the lives of many young workers and their families. The following incident is a case in point.

## Resources

### Government Agencies

- OSHA: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers)
- NIOSH: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth)
- Youth@Work: Talking Safety: National health and safety curriculum for teens: [www.youngworkers.org](http://www.youngworkers.org)
- Federal Network for Young Worker Safety & Health: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/fedNet](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fedNet)
- Washington State Department of Labor & Industries: [www.TeenWorkers.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.TeenWorkers.Lni.wa.gov)
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health: [www.mass.gov/dph/ohsp](http://www.mass.gov/dph/ohsp)

### Academic Institutions

- University of California at Berkeley, Labor Occupational Health Program: [www.youngworkers.org](http://www.youngworkers.org)
- University of Washington School-to-Work Program: [www.uwworksafe.com/worksafe](http://www.uwworksafe.com/worksafe)
- UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program: [www.losh.ucla.edu/youth/index.html](http://www.losh.ucla.edu/youth/index.html)

### Nonprofit Organizations

- ASSE: [www.asse.org](http://www.asse.org)
- Education Development Center Inc.: <http://main.edc.org>
- MassCOSH Teens Lead @ Work: [www.masscosh.org/teens.htm](http://www.masscosh.org/teens.htm)
- NYCOSH Young Worker: [www.nycosh.org/index\\_young\\_workers.html](http://www.nycosh.org/index_young_workers.html)
- American Public Health Association's Occupational Health and Safety Section Young Worker Health and Safety Network: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/resources.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/resources.html)

### Videos

*Lost Youth.* This 17-minute program (available in DVD and VHS) was produced in 2003 by the Communications Department of the Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia. Learn more at [www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/Resources-YoungWorkers.asp](http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/YoungWorker/Resources-YoungWorkers.asp)

*Teen Workers: Real Jobs, Real Risks.* This 13-minute program (available in DVD and VHS) was produced in 2005 by the School to Work Program, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, University of Washington. Learn more at [www.uwworksafe.com/worksafe](http://www.uwworksafe.com/worksafe).



**Prevention requires a combination of education, outreach and enforcement. These activities require a multifaceted approach aimed at employers, teens, parents, schools and communities.**

This incident occurred at a small family-owned ice manufacturing company. The employee was using an ice-bagging machine (a Matthiesen Bagger model FSV 510 Volumetric), which uses an 8-in. auger to crush the ice in the hopper, which measured 24.5 in. x 19.5 in. The operator's station was at the far end of the machine from the hopper and has a foot treadle with both on/off and emergency shutoff switches. The hopper was unguarded at the time of the incident.

The victim, a 14-year-old girl, was visiting a friend who was working in the plant. To earn money for camp, she was helping bag ice. One of the bags became overfilled, so the 14-year-old took the bag to the hopper end of the machine—where the auger was located—in order to dump the excess ice into the hopper. The bag became caught in the auger, pulling the victim by both arms into the machine. It took 55 minutes to get her released. Despite multiple surgeries and extensive rehabilitation, she will never regain full use of her arms. The victim—now 18—received a total disability payment of approximately \$90,000.

#### **Preventive Controls**

Employers should take several actions to prevent similar incidents:

- Provide training for safe operation of mechanized equipment.
- Ensure that only trained operators are given access to the equipment.
- Install and ensure the maintenance of adequate guarding systems on equipment.
- Comply with child labor laws that prohibit operators under the age of 18.

#### **Prevention Strategies**

Prevention requires a combination of education, outreach and enforcement. These activities require a multifaceted approach aimed at employers, teens, parents, schools and communities.

#### **Strategies for Employers**

- Follow all child labor and relevant safety and health regulations.
- Provide increased supervision to new workers.
- Consider a young worker's physical capacity to perform the job safely; maturity to exercise good judgment; and ability to read and understand written instructions and safety signs.
- Involve coworkers. Create a mentoring program among experienced workers, including experienced teen workers.
- Encourage young workers to regularly ask questions and ask for assistance.
- Provide more detailed training for those new to the world of work including: new employee orientation; specific task training; age-appropriate training—make it fun and easy to understand; frequent review and retraining.

#### **Strategies for Parents & Teens**

- Parents need to know the dangers their teen may face in the workplace and provide permission for them to work.

- Parents and teens should be aware of restrictions for hazardous work and work hours for minors. The minimum age for most employment is 14.

- Teens should know their rights, which include the right to a safe and healthy workplace, and the right to refuse to perform dangerous work. Teens should know what work activities they are not permitted to perform. They also should know that they can decline to do a task for which they have not been trained.

- Teens should be encouraged to ask the following questions in any job:

- 1) What are the hazards and dangers of my job?
- 2) What are my safety and health responsibilities?
- 3) Will I receive job safety training and information on any safety gear I will need to wear?
- 4) Who do I ask if I have a safety question?
- 5) What should I do if I get hurt?

#### **Strategies for Schools & Communities**

- Encourage high schools and job training and placement programs to integrate curricula about workplace safety and teens' on-the-job rights.

- A study in three communities indicated the following community-based approaches are promising strategies for preventing workplace injuries to minors:

- 1) Develop community coalitions comprised of business associations, labor groups, schools, job placement and training programs, youth advocacy groups, teen organizations, government agencies, healthcare providers and family members.

- 2) Encourage community coalitions to provide information to employers on the regulations for hiring minors, including the need to have a minor work endorsement or permit, the importance of providing training when a young worker is new to a job, and the need to provide periodic retraining and ongoing supervision.

- 3) Conduct an assessment of the community to determine the extent and nature of local teen employment and workplace injury. Based on the composition of the types of industries in the community, target outreach measures based on the potential job activities and hazards that teens are likely to encounter.

- 4) Provide training and educational resources to members of the community so all are informed about the major issues concerning young workers.

- 5) Assess teen attitudes toward work and workplace safety and health issues through the use of surveys or focus groups. Promote peer education programs to address workplace safety and health issues.

#### **Outreach & Education**

In 1996, NIOSH funded three projects to develop and implement community-based strategies to promote young worker safety. These projects led to the development of curricula aimed at high-school students and identified other community strategies for reducing injuries to teens in the workplace (NIOSH, 1999). As a result, various state-based curricula and websites have been developed to provide similar education and outreach in states such as California, Massachusetts and Washington.

In 1998, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a report of a committee of experts summarizing the research and issues related to the safety and health conditions of child labor. The committee developed recommendations to guide the development of public policy on youth employment. One recommendation states that "a national initiative should be undertaken to develop and provide information and training to reduce the risks and enhance the benefits associated with youth employment" (National Research Council, 1998). This recommendation has been implemented in several ways throughout the country.

For example, Youth@Work: Talking Safety, a national safety and health curriculum for high-school students, has been developed by the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Education Development Center Inc. (EDC) in Newton, MA, in collaboration with NIOSH. This curriculum is designed to help school- and community-based job training programs and work experience educators teach teens about safety and health on the job.

The 3- to 5-hour curriculum covers how to recognize and reduce hazards in the workplace, employees' rights and responsibilities, emergency preparedness, and how to report workplace concerns in an effective manner. It includes six units with 13 different activities, many designed for youth with cognitive disabilities. The activities focus on learner participation and include activities such as hazard mapping, games and role-play.

Each unit has learning objectives, teaching instructions, overheads and student handouts. These activities have been used by thousands of high-school teachers and job trainers, and have been evaluated in partnership with NIOSH and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education. State-specific versions of the curriculum, which reflect state laws and resources, will be available on the NIOSH website in 2007.

### **Partnerships & Collaborations**

In 2002, the U.S. Department of Labor began to focus special emphasis through the Employment Standards Administration (ESA) and OSHA to bring attention to the importance of preventing occupational injuries and illnesses among young workers. An intensive outreach program was launched focusing on teens, their parents, educators and employers. Since then, many government, academic and non-profit organizations have joined this effort.

While some groups were already working on youth issues, this recent focus has increased the number of offerings in the form of informational and classroom materials. For example, ESA began an initiative titled, "YouthRules!" designed to provide information to the public about the requirements for safe work hours and jobs deemed "hazardous" for young workers. Joint events were sponsored with local employers looking to recruit summer employees. These events, known as YouthRules rallies, have been held in Philadelphia, Houston, TX, and San Antonio, TX, and have

attracted hundreds of participants. Collaboration with ASSE chapters has enhanced the resources at the events and their popularity. Agencies such as OSHA and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission also have become involved to give greater depth to the scope of information available.

In addition, OSHA began to coordinate many of the agency's youth-oriented activities. A unique Teen Worker website was launched to provide information targeted to teens, their parents, teachers and employers. Several states have developed similar resources. An improved relationship between OSHA and the Wage and Hour Division led to greater sharing of information on fatality cases, injury data and special events at the national and regional level.

These activities led to the formation of the Federal Network for Young Worker Safety & Health (FedNet). Convened by OSHA to expand the scope of federal agencies focusing on young worker safety and health, FedNet aims to increase awareness of young worker safety and health issues; foster education, training and outreach to promote young worker safety and health; enhance relationships with small businesses, trade associations and other organizations; and promote resources that enhance employer compliance and knowledge of federal and state regulations related to young workers. By 2006, FedNet had more than 30 participants representing numerous federal agencies.

### **Activities in the States**

States have also formed partnerships to collaborate on cross-cutting issues with regard to protecting youth at work and providing them with tools for their future adult work activities. For example, community organizations, employers, health practitioners and parents in Massachusetts came together to establish a task force to develop a state blueprint for action to protect young workers. The document was released in 2003. Members continue to work together informally to implement the plan.

Prompted by the task force recommendations, an Interagency Working Group on Youth Employment has been established as well. This state team meets regularly to coordinate government activities to protect working youth in Massachusetts. The team includes representatives from the many government agencies that share responsibility for occupational health of young workers. These include the Occupational Health Surveillance and Injury Control programs at the Massachusetts Department of Health; the state Department of Labor, which is responsible for work permits; the Office of the Attorney General that enforces state child labor laws; the state workers' compensation agency; the School-to-Career Program in the state Department of Education; and the U.S. Department of Labor's Region I Wage and Hour group and OSHA programs.

The California Partnership for Young Worker Health and Safety has been meeting since 1997. This statewide working group brings together representatives from key governmental agencies with organ-



izations representing educators, employers, parents and others. Among the partnership's successes:

- Developed and published recommendations to protect and educate California's young workers (first published in 1998, updated in 2004).

- Support and promote curricula to educate high-school students about workplace safety and health and their rights on the job.

- Supported legislation to establish the California Resource Network for Young Worker Health and Safety in 2000. Through a website ([www.youngworkers.org](http://www.youngworkers.org)), an annual public awareness campaign and outreach efforts coordinated with other partnership members, the network provides information and resources to teachers, schools, job training programs, employers, parents, work permit issuers, young people and others.

- Helped to establish an annual public awareness campaign, Safe Jobs for Youth Month, held every May. Activities include media outreach, teen poster and journalism contests, and distribution of a resource kit for teachers and community educators.

Starting in 2000, OSHA (through its Susan B. Harwood grant program) has funded the National Young Worker Safety Resource Center, coordinated by University of California, Berkeley's LOHP and EDC. A report summarizing the center's recommendations for a state-based approach to preventing occupational injuries has been published (NIOSH, 2005). In addition, the center has helped teams in 13 states provide training curricula (similar to the Youth@Work curriculum) and incorporate training for youth in school- and community-based job training and placement programs (Young Worker Safety Resource Center, 2005). To date, more than 2,800 educators have been trained; they, in turn, have reached tens of thousands of young workers.

Washington State has also partnered with industry groups and the University of Washington to reach employers and youth. Since 1997, the state's L&I group has collaborated with the University of Washington to develop occupational safety and health curricula materials for high-school teachers. These include a generic set of modules, as well as a set aimed at agricultural employment settings. To date, more than 800 educators have been trained on the use of the curricula (Linker, Miller, Freeman et al., 2005).

In addition, L&I partnered with the Washington Restaurant Association to create an outreach initiative to help small businesses reduce the number of injuries among their young workers. In general, restaurants hire nearly 50% of young workers. In 2001, more than 300 restaurant managers, supervisors and crew leaders attended restaurant safety workshops. Materials specific to injury prevention in restaurants were developed and are posted on the L&I website. Current efforts are also under way to provide similar outreach and assistance to agricultural employers. The department also organizes the Governor's Safety and Health Conference each year, which since 1998, has incorporated a special program for high-school students and their teachers.

## Teen Peer Groups

In some locations, groups of teens have initiated organized efforts to bring the message of workplace safety and health to their peers. In the Boston area, for example, in response to the killing of an 18-year-old employee during a robbery in a retail pharmacy, teens from the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health joined with teens from the Brazilian Immigrant Center to organize a peer-led group to address workplace safety issues faced by teen workers.

A report of the survey the group conducted among young retail employees about workplace violence was recently released. This group also provides peer education workshops about workplace safety and health, and rights and responsibilities. These activities are an important component of addressing workplace issues for teens. Participation in such efforts will be beneficial for them during their adult work life as well.

In California, the statewide partnership, with support from the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation, has begun sponsoring two Young Worker Leadership Academies each year. Fifty students from 12 to 14 communities attend these academies, during which they learn about teen workplace injuries, hazards on the job and their rights in the workplace. They interview working teens, managers and employers. They begin to start thinking about how these problems can be addressed at the policy level, through education and by changing the laws. In addition, they practice putting this information to use by planning activities to educate their peers and others about teen worker safety issues.

Academy graduates have tackled a broad range of activities. For example, one group designed an interactive booth for a local farmers' market. Two teams developed online information and quizzes, and have asked their school administration to require that all youth who apply for work permits receive information on their workplace rights and pass the quiz. Other groups have conducted participatory workshops with young people in their schools and communities. This program is now in its third year.

## Conclusion

Teens under age 18 are a special population in the workforce. As minors, they are afforded special protections under federal and state child labor regulations that restrict their hours of work and prohibit certain hazardous work activities.

"It has been said that progress can be measured by the extent to which children's rights are safeguarded" (U.S. Department of Labor, 1967). Since 1920, when the United Nations and the International Labor Organization issued various declarations and conventions on the rights of children, the need to offer special protections to young workers has been recognized. This need stems from the unique vulnerabilities of these workers.

Policymakers, SH&E professionals, employers and the public have the responsibility to act on their behalf. As Oliver Tambo, president of the African National Congress said in 1985, "The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future." ■

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## ASSE on Young Worker Safety

ASSE offers resources to address the special challenges of managing young workers.

### Managing the Generation Mix

This book covers collaboration and the multi-generational team. It also explains that generational conflicts mirror critical business issues every organization faces as it transitions to the workplace of the future. (ASSE Order #10634)

### Coaching & Mentoring Skills

Topics include building trust, showing empathy, active listening, using influence tactics, providing feedback and training. Case studies, self-assessments and skill-building exercises are included as well. (ASSE Order #10603)

### How Smart Managers Create World-Class SH&E Programs

This book explains how to implement the VPP guidelines and what to expect in terms of cost savings and reduced risk of injuries. (ASSE Order #4406)

### Safety Supervision

This book helps the practitioners improve such crucial supervisory activities as investigating for cause and inspecting for hazards. The author explains how proven coaching and motivational techniques help to produce a safety culture at all levels of the workforce. (ASSE Order #4363)