

# YOUTH ON THE JOB

## #2 HAZARDS AT WORK

### So Many of Us Work...

Every year, more than 4 million young people under 18 will work. For most, work will be a good learning experience. However, some may be injured, and some will even die on the job.

### Did you know?

- One young worker **DIES** every five days from work-related injuries;
- 200,000 young people suffer work-related injuries each year;
- Young workers have an injury rate rate is higher than adults;
- Eight of ten teens injured in New York State work in service jobs.



### How Some Young Workers Were Injured at Work

Three young workers were lifting packages that were very heavy and suffered back and neck injuries that require long-term physical therapy.

**A 17 year-old worker was killed in a trash compactor in New York City when he was illegally asked to operate it.**

A 16-year old line cook in a fast food restaurant was pushing a container of hot grease out of the kitchen. When he reached the door, his foot slipped, the lid fell off and hot grease spilled over much of his body. He was severely burned and spent two weeks in the hospital. His scars will never go away.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

### Know Your Rights

Learn about federal and state laws that limit hours and types of jobs young people can do and that require companies to control hazards and provide training.

### Speak UP

If you know what safety and health hazards you are working with, such as hot grease, slippery floors and heavy lifting, you can speak up about them to help prevent injuries.

### Get Together

Join forces with coworkers to get your problems addressed.

### Wear Protective Equipment

Your employer is required to give you protective equipment such as gloves and goggles that you need for the job.

### Ask for Training

Education and training about hazards can help prevent injuries.



### WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE WORK?

Most young people work in the retail industry — shops, stores and restaurants and in the service industry — health care, recreation and entertainment.

Studies show that **over half of young worker injuries occur in retail (restaurants, grocery stores, department stores)** and the rest occur in the service industry (health care, amusement/recreation, business and social services), manufacturing and agriculture.

### Why so many young retail workers are injured and killed on the job:

The reason is **VIOLENCE**. Many young people work in retail establishments where they are often alone or handling money. They are at risk for robberies and other crimes that too often result in serious injury and death.

# DEATH AT A YOUNG AGE

The following lists the TOP FIVE categories of young workers who died on the job:

1. **Agricultural workers**..... 40%
2. **Retail workers**..... 22%
3. **Construction workers**..... 13%
4. **Services**..... 8%
5. **Manufacturing** ..... 5%

## WATCH OUT!

**FOOD SERVICE WORK** Slips, Falls, Burns, Cuts, Bruises, Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs), Stress (difficult customers or boss), Violence (robberies)

**OFFICE/CLERICAL WORK** RSIs, Eye Strain, Neck & Back Pain, Paper Cuts (lacerations), Bad Indoor Air Quality (sick building syndrome), Stress

**HEALTH CARE WORK** Infection, Heavy lifting (trays, laundry, patients) leading to back pain/injury, Allergies, Chemical Exposure, RSIs, Stress

**RETAIL/SALES WORK** RSIs, Lifting-related injuries, Violence, Harassment, Stress

**CONSTRUCTION WORK** Working with dangerous equipment, Falls, Exposure to chemicals and paint dust, asbestos and lead, Live electric wires, Extreme hot and cold temperatures, RSIs

**JANITOR/CLEAN-UP** Toxic chemicals in cleaning products, blood on discarded needles, RSIs

## What's an RSI?

An RSI—Repetitive Strain Injury—is an injury to your muscles, tendons or nerves caused by repeating a movement over and over again. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is an example of an RSI. 1/3 of injuries that disable workers are caused by RSIs. The risk of suffering from RSIs exist on almost every single job.

### Young Workers Get Injured on All Kinds of Equipment

Tools, machines and equipment you use at work can cause injury. Most worker-related injuries result from:

**DRIVING AN AUTOMOBILE**

**USING POWER TOOLS**

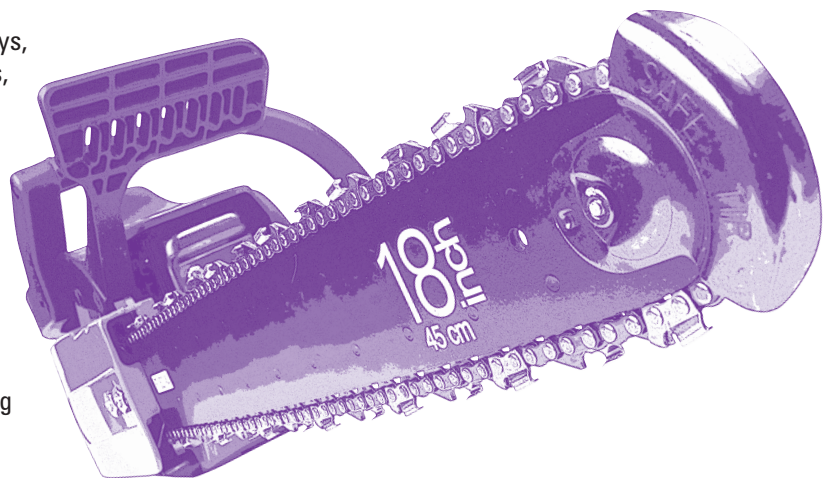
**WORKING ON MEAT SLICERS**

**USING BOX CUTTERS**

**USING HOT WATER OR OIL**

**USING A COMPUTER**

**WORKING AT A CASH REGISTER**



## GETTING HELP!!

**CALL NYCOSH.** The New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) is a worker-friendly organization that will provide advice to you about where to go for help. NYCOSH is a non-profit coalition of 200 local unions and more than 400 individual workers, physicians, lawyers and other health and safety activists – all dedicated to the right of every worker to a safe and healthful workplace.

**CONTACT: NYCOSH 212-227-6440**  
[www.nycosh.org](http://www.nycosh.org)



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