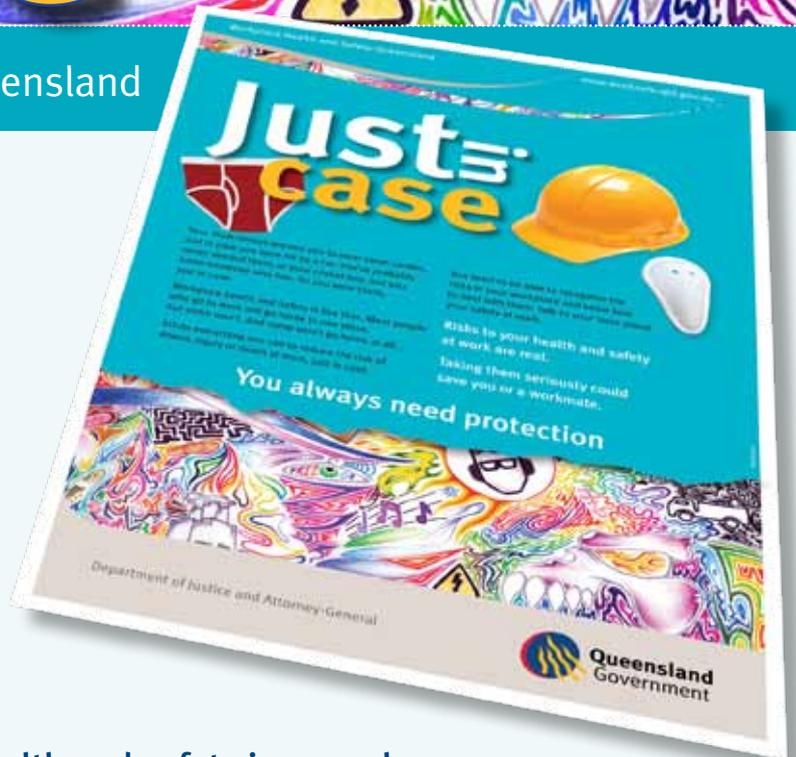


# Just in case

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Tips for teachers using the 'you always need protection / just in case' young workers poster and safety pointer in classrooms



Thank you for discussing workplace health and safety in your classroom

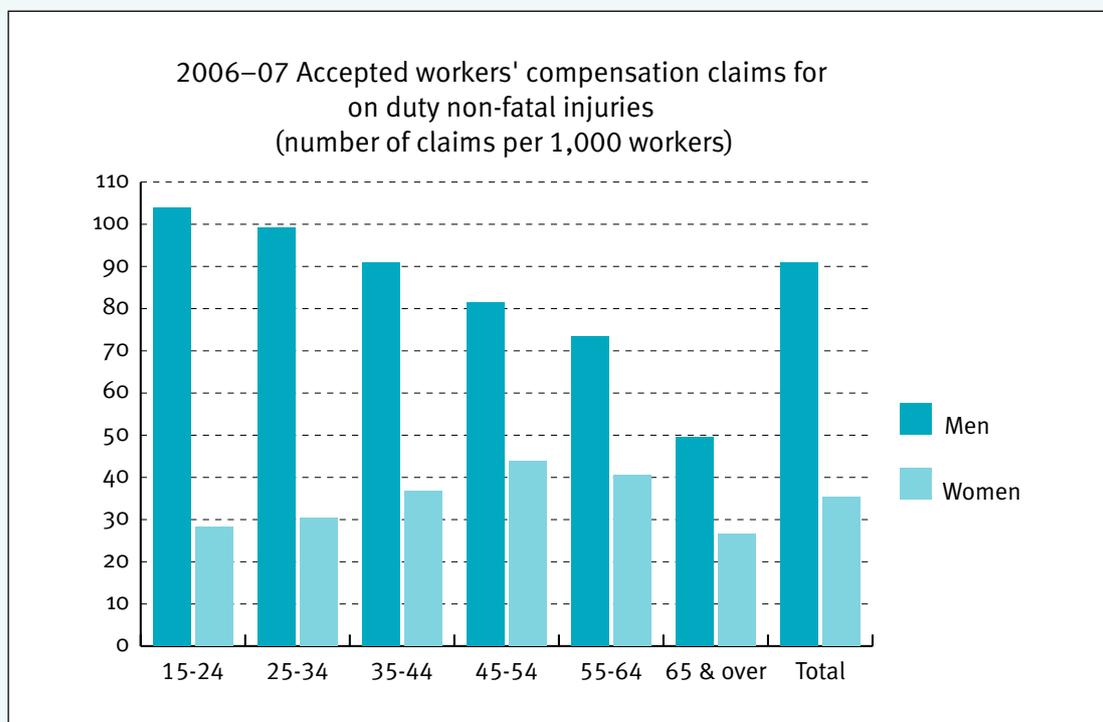
Safety at work is an issue that concerns everyone—employers, employees, their families and the community.

Each year in Queensland, work-related injury and illness are estimated to cost the community more than \$5.2 billion and claim approximately 100 lives<sup>1</sup>; that is a third of Queensland's road toll.

Young workers are at high risk of injury and illness at work. You would think that incidents at work would not discriminate, that regardless of gender, age or race, people would all have an equal risk of being injured at work. Unfortunately that is not the case.

<sup>1</sup> (2006). Queensland Workers' Compensations Scheme Statistics Reporting 2003–04 and The Costs of Workplace and Illness in Queensland—Workplace Health and Safety Queensland 2005–06.

If you are a young male you are more likely than anyone else to get injured or an illness at work, as the following injury statistics demonstrate:



To assist young workers to work safely and to come home safely, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland has produced a range of materials designed specifically for young workers.

These materials promote discussion, create an interest in and awareness of workplace health and safety, and provide practical and straight-forward information on how to manage their own safety at work.

The young workers materials encourage young people to do four things:

- ask questions
- get training
- wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
- refuse unsafe work.

## A little more about why young workers are at a high risk of workplace injury and illness

Young workers have a number of unique physical and mental characteristics that may contribute to their high workplace injury rates. These characteristics include:

- their bodies maturing more quickly than their minds, emotional skills and social skills
- high risk thresholds and feelings of invulnerability
- rapid, irregular physical growth and body changes that may cause uncoordinated movements (interestingly, 'hit and being hit' is by far the leading mechanism of injury for young workers)
- lower levels of endurance, strength and flexibility.

Young workers are also relatively new to the workforce, meaning they have low levels of experience and are often unsure of their rights and responsibilities.

## Possible curriculum links

Workplace health and safety naturally sits within vocational subjects, and should be included in preparation for work experience placements. It can also be successfully integrated as a meaningful topic in a number of other subject areas including:

Key learning area	Organisers	Related workplace health and safety elements
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking and listening</li> <li>• Reading and viewing</li> <li>• Writing and designing</li> <li>• Language elements</li> <li>• Literary and non-literary texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace negotiations</li> <li>• Consultation between management and staff</li> <li>• Presenting safety information and training including the creation of information products</li> <li>• Incident investigations including interviewing witnesses and writing reports</li> </ul>
Health and physical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Physical activity</li> <li>• Personal development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychosocial impacts of work including hazards, risk factors and their management</li> <li>• Influence of environment on health, including workplace design, work processes and materials used</li> <li>• Workplace health and safety promotion in workplaces and the community</li> <li>• Fitness for work</li> <li>• Musculoskeletal disorder awareness</li> <li>• Communication and negotiation</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number</li> <li>• Algebra</li> <li>• Measurement</li> <li>• Chance and data</li> <li>• Space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurement of force, noise, exposure, time, weight, height, length, speed, repetitions and other factors in workplaces and work tasks</li> <li>• Conversion of measurements to determine control measures and acceptable exposure in a workplace</li> <li>• Gathering, analysis and presentation of data, such as injury rates</li> <li>• Mapping of workplaces, work tasks, emergency procedures</li> </ul>
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science as a human endeavour</li> <li>• Earth and beyond</li> <li>• Energy and change</li> <li>• Life and living</li> <li>• Natural and processed materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination of the impact of scientific advancement on work and workplace health and safety</li> <li>• Examination of the impact of man made products on the human body</li> <li>• Studies of force and motion in work tasks</li> <li>• Classification of substances used in workplaces</li> <li>• Properties of hazardous materials, including reaction rate, factors affecting safe storage and use, creation of hazardous materials through mixing other materials (eg. cleaning products)</li> <li>• Practical use of PPE</li> </ul>

Key learning area	Organisers	Related workplace health and safety elements
Studies of Society and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time, continuity and change</li> <li>• Place and space</li> <li>• Culture and identity</li> <li>• Political and economic systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of social and political changes on the workplace, including changes in work tasks, work demands and workplace health and safety</li> <li>• Examination of power relations in workplaces and the political system</li> <li>• Economic impacts of workplace health and safety</li> <li>• Government regulation of workplace health and safety</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology as a human endeavour</li> <li>• Information, materials and systems (resources)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of technology on work, including workplaces, work processes and work tasks</li> <li>• Hazards and risks reduced through technology</li> <li>• Hazards and risks introduced by technology</li> <li>• Workplace health and safety and new technology (e.g. nanotechnology), predicting impacts, hazards and risks, regulating and managing the unknown</li> <li>• The relationship between product design, the supply chain and workplace health and safety</li> </ul>
The Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dance</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Visual art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role playing workplace negotiations, outcomes of workplace injury, illness or death on a workplace, family and the community</li> <li>• Design of workplace health and safety information products, including safety signage and media reports.</li> </ul>

*(Based on the Year Nine Essential Learnings in the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework)*

This list is not the result of a formal curriculum mapping exercise and is by no means exhaustive. However, it may encourage you to consider using workplace health and safety as a topic for integrated learning under the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework.

# Discussion guidance:

This safety pointer aims to:

- raise awareness of workplace health and safety amongst young workers
- introduce the idea of young workers being at risk of injury or illness at work
- normalise the idea of taking safety precautions at work.

## Who is at risk of workplace injury or illness?

YOU! There are risks in every workplace and there are risks to your health and safety associated with every job.

Most people who go to work will go home in one piece, but some will not, and some will not go home at all. More than 100 Queenslanders die at work every year, and about 16 of those are young people.

## What risks are there?

Workplace hazards and risks can be classified into five main groups, physical hazards, biological hazards, chemical hazards, ergonomic hazards and psychosocial hazards.

	Physical	Biological	Chemical	Ergonomic	Psychosocial
Hazard	Hazards from physical things	Hazards from biological agents	Hazardous materials	Hazards caused by the design of the workplace or work process	Hazards that affect mental and social health
Examples	Electricity Noise Machines Heat and cold Ladders Knives Uneven floors	Blood Bacteria and viruses Plants Insect bites Bodily fluids	Liquids Vapours and fumes Gases Flammable materials	Poor lighting Bad posture Constant lifting Badly designed workstations Repetitive physical tasks Using too much force	Bullying Harassment Violence Working alone High demand on workers

## When am I at risk of a workplace injury?

You are always at risk of an injury or illness at work; however you can eliminate or manage almost all workplace risks. People get hurt during work experience, on their first day and every day after that. Statistics show that you are much more likely to be injured on your first day of work and in the first few months at a new job than if you've been doing that job for a while.

## Where are workplace health and safety risks?

All workplaces have some risks; the number and type of risks vary depending on the type of workplace, the type of work being carried out, the equipment being used and lots of other factors.

# Possible classroom activities

These activities may be completed individually, in small groups or as a whole class depending on the needs of your students and your preferred teaching style.

## Safety everyday

Brainstorm things that students do to protect their health and safety in every day life, like wearing seatbelts. See how many of these would be important in the workplace.

## Newspaper scan

Have students search newspapers, either physically or online, for stories about workplace incidents. Record and discuss the type of incident and the outcome. Brainstorm possible causes of the incident and possible protective measures to prevent the incident from reoccurring.

## School safety committee

Have students form their own safety committee. Encourage them to brainstorm and research hazards and risks to their health and safety at school. Ask students to prioritise the list they have created and create a strategy to manage one of the higher priority risks. Depending on the risk chosen students may enact the strategy to manage the risk or present their strategy to the Principal, Parents and Citizens Association or Student Representative Council

## Photo journalism

Provide students or groups of students with a digital camera to record anything relating to workplace health and safety that they encounter in a normal week or weekend. Students may notice warning signs, safety notices, traffic controllers wearing high visibility vests, or any number of other things. Have students research what they have captured in their favourite image and present it to the class.

## Interviewing workers

Create a set of interview questions about workplace health and safety for students to ask a parent, family member or friend who is employed to discover more about the risks in their job.

## Risk assessment

Visit the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland website [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) and download the risk assessment tool. Introduce students to risk assessments and encourage them to complete an assessment for a task that they are familiar with.

## Famous failures

Ask students to research and report on a famous workplace health and safety failure. International events like Chernobyl, Australian events like the Beaconsfield mine disaster, events in popular culture like the death of Brandon Lee while filming 'The Crow', or events that have entered folklore like the deaths associated with opening Tutankhamen's tomb may be suitable for investigation.

## Dream job

Have students brainstorm and then research the workplace health and safety risks and control measures associated with their dream job.

## Career planning

Introduce the idea of 'fitness for work' to students and the idea of planning a career with some consideration of health and safety aspects. Have students match physical requirements, job demands and workplace risks and present these as a decision making tool, matrix, check list or board game.

## Sensitive issues

For some students (and some teachers) workplace health and safety can be a sensitive topic.

Anyone who has lost a friend, family member or colleague in a workplace incident, knows someone suffering from a workplace injury or illness, or has strong views on the subject may find that the topic raises difficult feelings or memories.

Protective measures that you may like to consider before discussing workplace health and safety in your classroom include:

- let students know about the discussion in advance
- set clear ground rules about discussion etiquette, especially respecting others
- allow students who feel uncomfortable to withdraw from the discussion
- describe and encourage appropriate levels of disclosure
- have all students agree that the discussion stays in the classroom and is not repeated or continued outside of the classroom
- encourage students to talk to a school counsellor or trusted adult if they are distressed by the discussion.

## Additional resources

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

- Injury statistics for young people
- Occupational health and safety tip sheets
- New and young workers in the hospitality industry
- *Children and Young Workers Code of Practice 2006*.

Available at [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) or by calling the Workplace Health and Safety infoline 1300 737 341.

### Safework SA Youth@Work

Health and safety and industrial relations information for young workers, including a virtual supermarket, office and hotel, and hunt the hazards game.

[www.safework.sa.gov.au/youth/](http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/youth/)

### Dr Aargh's Workshop of Horrors

Dr Aargh's workshop is an A – Z of workplace injuries and illnesses, with youth-friendly explanations of an illness or injury and fairly confronting image for each letter of the alphabet.

[www.osh.dol.govt.nz/kidz/gore/index.shtml](http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/kidz/gore/index.shtml)

### WorkSafe WA Smart Move

WorkSafe SmartMove is designed for students in years ten to twelve to raise workplace health and safety awareness. It provides information and tests about the potential dangers of the workplace but young workers rights and responsibilities.

[www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/smartmove/index.htm](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/smartmove/index.htm)