

Each year, thousands of young people start part-time or summer construction jobs. Building sites are busy places that look different from day to day, even hour to hour. New structures, pipes, or wires can appear overnight, and many workers with different skills often work on a site at the same time. Because of these quick shifts, it's crucial for young construction workers to know some key safety tips to protect themselves in this high-risk industry. Here are the most important safety tips for young workers in construction:



Personal protective gear

Personal protective equipment (PPE) helps protect workers from injuries and illnesses. Workers should always wear it on a construction site. If unsure about what PPE to use or if you lack the right equipment, ask your supervisor. Key PPE items include:

1. Protective headgear:

Helmets or hard hats prevent head injuries from falling or flying objects, or from bumping into fixed objects.

2. Eye protection:

Safety glasses or goggles prevent eye injuries from foreign objects during jobs like chipping, grinding, masonry work, woodworking, sawing, drilling, sanding, or painting.

3. Foot protection:

Safety non-slip footwear protects toes and feet from being crushed by heavy objects when handling materials like lumber, sheetrock, decking, shingles, or heavy tools. It also helps prevent injuries from slips and trips.

4. Hand protection:

Gloves of different types can protect against various physical or chemical hazards, preventing cuts, abrasions, burns, and splinters.

5. Hearing protection:

Using earplugs, when necessary, can prevent hearing damage when loud equipment and machinery are working nearby.

Ensure that your PPE fits properly and is in good condition. Regularly inspect and replace damaged gear.



Fall protection

Falls are a leading cause of injuries in construction. Young workers should:

- Use proper fall protection such as a body harness, lanyard, or lifeline when working at heights above 6 feet.
- Ensure ladders are stable before climbing.
- Use the “three-point rule” when climbing ladders: always have two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder at all times.
- Keep work areas free of tripping hazards.



Hazard awareness

To maintain a safe working environment, young workers should:

- Stay alert and remain aware of the surroundings.
- Identify potential hazards such as moving equipment, electrical dangers, or unstable structures.
- Report any unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.



Safe lifting techniques

Young workers should use these simple lifting techniques to prevent back injuries:

1. Size up the load and ask for help if needed.
2. Plan the route and ensure it's free of hazards.
3. Keep feet shoulder-width apart.
4. Bend the knees, not the waist.
5. Get a good grip. (Gloves help!)
6. Keep the load close to the body.
7. Lift with the legs, not the back.
8. Pivot the feet instead of twisting the back.

When moving heavy materials, use wheelbarrows or other lifting equipment or ask for help as needed.





Training and supervision

Proper training and supervision are vital for ensuring that young workers can perform tasks safely and effectively. Young workers should always:

- Participate in all safety training sessions provided.
- Ask questions if unsure about any task or safety procedure.
- Work under close supervision until competent in safe work practices.



Know your rights

Understanding your worker rights is essential for maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. Young workers should:

- Understand that certain tasks are prohibited for workers under 18, such as operating heavy machinery or working in excavations.
- Know that all employees have the right to a safe workplace and proper training.
- Speak up about any safety concerns.

Construction jobs offer great opportunities to earn money and learn valuable skills. However, construction work can also pose many potential dangers. By following all the safety rules set by your employer, you can enjoy a productive and safe career in the construction industry.

Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility!



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