



# Are you ready for work?

## What are the minimum ages for working in Ontario?

You can't do some jobs in Ontario if you aren't old enough. There are minimum age rules for different kinds of workplaces.

### **14 years old**

You must be 14 or older to work in offices, stores, arenas or restaurant serving areas.

### **15 years old**

You must be 15 or older to work in most factories, including restaurant kitchens, produce and meat preparation or shipping and receiving areas in grocery stores, laundries and warehouses.

### **16 years old**

You must be 16 or older to do construction work or work in a logging operation, mining plant or at a surface mine (except at the working face where you must be at least 18).

### **18 years old**

You must be 18 or older to work in an underground mine or at the working face of a surface mine or to work doing window cleaning.

*If you aren't sure about the minimum age for a workplace you can call the Ministry of Labour at 1-800-268-8013 to find out.*

## *What new workers need to know about job safety...*

### **What is the Occupational Health and Safety Act?**

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) is an Ontario law that sets out requirements for health and safety in the workplace.

The OHSA was made to keep workers from getting hurt or sick on the job. It tells you what your employer, your supervisor, you and other workers have to do to make the job safe.

By law your employer and supervisor must make sure your workplace is safe and you and other workers must follow all safety rules.

In many workplaces there will be a health and safety committee that meets regularly to deal with health and safety issues. It has members who are workers and some who are management.

### **Is your job covered by the OHSA?**

Almost all workers in Ontario are covered by the OHSA, but there are some exceptions. For example, if you work in your own home or as a nanny in someone else's home you are not covered.

Workers in federal workplaces are covered under federal health and safety legislation.

*If you aren't sure what law covers your job, you can call the Ministry of Labour to find out or check on the web at: [www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca](http://www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca).*

*To learn more about the rules at work*

[www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca](http://www.WorkSmartOntario.gov.on.ca)

[www.labour.gov.on.ca](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca)

[www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca)

## **Ask about safety right from the start**

### **What to ask at a job interview**

It's a good idea to ask questions about safety when you go for a job interview. It's hard to do when you're nervous, but you need to hear the answers to find out if the employer cares about your safety. Some questions to ask are:

- Will I get job safety training? When will I get it? (It has to be before you do the work).
- Will I be working with any chemicals? If I'm working with any chemicals, will I get training before I start to use the chemicals?
- Is there any safety gear, like safety glasses, that I'll have to wear? Do I have to buy the gear or will you give it to me? Will I receive training so I know how to wear it properly and make sure it's in good condition?
- Will I be told about emergency procedures, what to do if I get hurt, etc.?

### **What to do on your first day or when assigned a new task**

The most important thing is to *ask questions*. There is no such thing as a dumb question, especially when you're asking how to do a job that you've never done before. ASK until you're out of questions to make sure you are totally clear on the task that needs to be done and how to do it safely.

### **If you don't think your work is safe**

The OHSA says that if you see something at work that you don't think is safe you *must* tell your supervisor. Do it right away.

If you have talked to your supervisor and still think something is unsafe, you may have certain rights under the OHSA to refuse to do that work until the issue has been dealt with.

The OHSA says your supervisor must try to resolve the problem before you start working again. In cases where the supervisor says it's safe and you still feel it is not, you may still have a right to refuse to work and a Ministry of Labour inspector must be called to investigate and decide if it's safe for you to go back to work.

### **Can you be fired for refusing to work or asking about safety?**

It is against the law for your employer to punish or fire you for refusing work that you think is unsafe or for raising a concern about a safety issue.

If you feel you have been punished (e.g. sent home without pay, had your hours drastically cut or were fired) you can report it to the Ministry of Labour.

The Ministry will guide you either to your union (if there is one) or to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

### **What to do if you are injured at work**

Get first aid right away and tell your supervisor too. Make sure someone tells your supervisor if you can't.

Get medical help. Also, your employer may need to file a notice of the injury with the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) as soon as possible. You might be able to receive benefits from the WSIB for any time you miss from work because you got hurt.

### **Where to get help**

Look for the phone number for the Ministry of Labour office nearest to your workplace in the government listings in your telephone book or call 1-800-268-8013.

Call the WSIB at 1-800-387-0750 if you have questions about getting paid if you are hurt at work.