



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Keeping Young Workers Safe

Occupational Injuries and Deaths Among Younger Workers — United States, 1998–2007

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[Announcer 1] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Many young people are employed in jobs that place them at increased risk for injury. Work experience can be valuable for young people and is often a necessity as they gain independence, but without proper training, some jobs can be hazardous.

Young workers, aged 15 to 24 years, suffer about 800,000 work-related injuries each year and over 500 die. About half of the work-related fatalities are transportation-related. Young people working in mining, agriculture, and construction are at greatest risk for fatal injuries.

According to Chris Estes, a researcher with CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, things are changing.

"There have been small declines in work injury, but there's still a lot of room for improvement."

Jobs that involve lifting or moving heavy objects put stress and strain on the body and are often the source of injuries for young people.

"Over half of work injuries among young workers involve what we call contact with objects or equipment. That's like being struck by a falling tool or caught in machinery."

There are federal and state laws that place restrictions on the type of work that workers under 18 can do.

"In most industries, workers under 18 cannot engage in particularly hazardous work activities. For example, operating a forklift or driving as a regular part of their job."

Businesses have the primary responsibility for workplace safety. For injury rates to go down, employers need to identify hazards and consistently strive to make the work environment safer. Appropriate safety training and protective equipment should be mandatory.

Again - Chris Estes with CDC:

"There are things that businesses can do and things that young workers can do. Workers themselves have responsibilities for complying with their employers' safety practices by following safety guidelines."

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer 2] For more information about keeping young people safe on the job, go to www.cdc.gov and click on “Young Worker Safety and Health” in the A to Z index.

[Announcer 1] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.