A serious work-related injury is defined as an injury resulting in death, hospitalization, or in the judgment of the treating physician, results in, or will result in:

A. Significant scarring or disfigurement; OR
B. Permanent disability; OR
C. Protracted loss of consciousness; OR
D. Loss of a body part or bodily function; OR
E. Is less significant but similar to injuries among this population within ten days of diagnosis (105 CMR 300).

Materials Available from MDPH's Teens at Work Project

To Report
By telephone: Call 617-624-5632.
By mail: Send reporting form to MDPH address listed on the front of this newsletter.
By fax: Fax reporting form to 617-624-5696.
For more information about reporting, to request reporting forms, or to discuss hospital computer-generated reporting:
Call 617-624-5632.

Occupational Health and Safety

Spring 2003
Injuries to Young Grocery Store Workers

More Massachusetts teens work in grocery stores than in any other industry except restaurants. Approximately 12% of all employed 15-17-year-olds - more than 10,000 teens - worked in grocery stores in 1996. Grocery stores are also second only to restaurants in terms of the numbers of injuries to teen workers in Massachusetts. Of the 4,475 injuries among workers less than 18 years-old identified by the Teens at Work Project from 1993-2000, 13% (n=558) occurred in grocery stores.1 Although approximately the same numbers of teenage boys and girls were employed in grocery stores, boys sustained 72% of all injuries to young grocery store workers. This finding is similar to patterns of work-related injuries to teens among all industries combined and is likely explained, at least in part, by the assignment of more hazardous tasks to boys.

Sprains and strains were the most common injuries (37%, n=186) sustained by young grocery store workers (Figure 1). Slightly less than half (48%) of all sprains and strains affected the back. Bagging groceries and lifting items were listed as the causes of injury for 47% (n=76) of the sprain and strain cases identified through workers’ compensation claims. Back injuries among young workers are of particular concern because individuals with prior back injuries may be at increased risk for other back injuries later in life.

Cuts and lacerations were the second most common type of injury (33%, n=146) among teens working in grocery stores. Sixty-five percent (n= 72) of the cases identified through workers’ compensation claims indicate that the injuries were sustained while using knives, razor blades or box cutters. Connecticut continued on page 3

Figure 1: Occupational Injuries to Teens Employed in Grocery Stores by Injury Type Massachusetts: 1993-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Injury</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fractures</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprains, Strains, Tears</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat Burns, Scalds</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuts, Lacerations, Punctures</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruises, contusions, Crushing</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes 51 injuries for which information about injury type was not available.

17-year-old shellstocker
I had worked a 13-hour shift on Saturday. On Sunday morning my back was sore and after two hours at work, it really hurt. I grabbed a back brace from the medical department and told my manager that I was in pain. He asked me to stay because we were short staffed that day. He told me not to lift anything anymore, but by 3 p.m. my back really hurt and I could barely walk. I drove myself home and went to see my doctor the next morning.

Note: Child labor laws limit work shifts for 16 and 17-year-olds to a maximum of nine hours per day.

16-year-old produce stocker
I was cutting up big cardboard boxes (used to display watermelons) to throw them in the compactor. While holding the box, I stuck the box cutter in and pulled it down the cardboard. The blade was not deep enough into the box, so the knife slipped and cut my hand. I told my manager right away and a co-worker took me to the hospital.

Note: Child labor laws prohibit anyone under the age of 18 from using or cleaning meat slicers.

Sprains, Strains, Tears
13%

What You Can Do to Prevent Injuries to Young Workers

Employers
• Identify and eliminate hazards as much as possible.
• Comply with child labor laws and occupational health and safety regulations applicable to your business.
• Train teen workers to use safe work practices, recognize hazards, be prepared for emergencies, and speak up with concerns.
• Ensure that school-based work experience programs provide safe and healthful environments.

Educators
• Be familiar with federal and state child labor laws.
• Discuss workplace hazards and students’ rights and responsibilities as workers.
• Ensure that school-based work experience programs provide safe and healthful environments.

Parents
• Take an active role in the employment decisions of your teens.
• Discuss the types of tasks involved and the training and supervision provided by the employer.
• Know where you can get information about child labor laws.

Teens
• Know your rights to a safe and healthful workplace.
• Learn to recognize hazards at work and speak up when you see them.
• Participate in training programs at work or request training if none is offered.
• Use safe work practices.
• Learn where you can get information about child labor laws.

For More Information
On child labor laws or wages:
Mass. Attorney General’s Office
Fair Labor and Business Practices Division
617-727-3465; wwwAGO.state.ma.us/labor

U.S. Dept. of Labor
Wage & Hour Division
617-624-6700; www.dol.gov/esa/whd

On workers’ compensation:
Mass. Dept. of Industrial Accidents
617-727-4900, ext. 470 or 800-323-3249, ext. 470; www.state.ma.us/dla

On discrimination at work or in hiring:
Mass. Commission Against Discrimination (M CAD)
617-727-3990

U.S. Dept. of Commerce
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
617-565-3200 or 800-669-4000; www.eeoc.gov

On workplace health and safety:
U.S. Dept. of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
617-565-9860; www.osha.gov

Mass. Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development
Division of Occupational Safety
617-969-7177; www.state.ma.us/dos

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCO SH)
617-825-7233

Western MassCO SH
413-731-0760; www.westernmasscosh.org

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Teens at Work Project • teens.atwork@state.ma.us
617-624-5632; www.state.ma.us/dph/hshre/dshp

Adapted from DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 95-125.
New Workers in New England: Health and Safety Ideas from Around the Region

This column highlights efforts of various organizations and agencies within New England to promote health and safety for working youth. This year’s focus is on the Maine Departments of Labor and Education.

Using Focus Groups to Create Effective Educational Strategies

* Teen Focus Groups: The Maine Department of Education has used focus groups to explore what teenagers know about workplace safety, where they came across this information, and how likely they are to speak up about workplace hazards. Some of the results include: teens knew little about the child labor laws and viewed them as restrictions rather than rights; the level of supervision varied greatly; and the primary safety concern was late night security. The information gleaned from these groups has informed Maine’s development of educational materials for teens and employers.

* Employer Focus Groups: The Maine Department of Labor has held focus groups for representatives of companies that employ young people to learn about the types of jobs where young people are employed, whether young people are given safety training on the job, and what the department can do to help employers prevent injuries to young workers. Some of the results include: employers do not have in-depth knowledge of the child labor laws; they provide teens the same training as adults; they need activity-based training and welcome resources and collaboration.

Training and Educational Materials for Employers

The Maine Department of Labor has used funds from a child labor violation settlement to produce SAFETEEN, a kit that helps employers teach their teen employees about workplace safety. Each SAFETEEN kit includes a book of safety training exercises that employers can use to teach teens about workplace safety, a booklet about workplace safety and child labor laws for employers, multiple copies of a booklet about workplace safety for teens, wallet cards, posters, and information about obtaining Starting Safely, Maine’s young worker safety curriculum. The kit is sent to employers under a cover letter signed by Maine’s governor and is distributed through Maine’s Career Center network. Maine is currently evaluating this effort.

Occupational Safety Training for Teachers

* The Department of Labor and the Jobs for Maine Graduates program provide workshops for teachers and job placement professionals, training them to use the Starting Safely curriculum.

* The Department of Labor, in collaboration with the University of Southern Maine, provides a week-long Summer Safety Institute for Educators on OSHA regulations and occupational safety issues.

* The Department of Education has a vocational education consultant responsible for safety education in vocational education programs.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

* The Maine Department of Labor has produced PSAs that have been shown in movie theatres (at a special nonprofit rate). Other theatre chains around the country have agreed to show young worker safety PSAs without charge.

* Maine also has produced two 30-second PSAs for television on teen worker safety that have been aired across the state.

For more information or to receive a copy of SAFETEEN, contact Chris Miaci, National Young Worker Safety Resource Center, EDC at cmiaeci@edc.org or 617-618-2238 or Lynne Lamstein, Maine Department of Labor, at Lynne.C.Lamstein@state.me.us or 207-624-6465.

Ongoing efforts in Massachusetts to protect teens in the workplace have been fragmented,” said Marcia Goldstein-Gelb, executive director of the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), a non-profit workplace health and safety advocacy group. “We need a comprehensive plan that will encompass parent, teen and employer education, enforcement of regulations, and changes in the environments in which teens work,” said Goldstein-Gelb.

Hopefully, through the efforts of the task force, fewer injuries like Ron’s will occur, thus ensuring positive and healthy work experiences for Massachusetts’ teenagers.

To learn more about issues facing teens in the workplace and on-the-job training on how to work safely and avoid injury:

• Fourteen percent did not have work permits or educational certification.

• Teens reported having to limit or not participate in their usual activities an average of 27 days as a result of their injuries; and

• Seventy-two percent believed their injuries were preventable.

* Percent based on 4,234 injuries for which industry was known.


* Name has been changed to protect confidentiality of a minor.

National Young Worker Safety Resource Center

Massachusetts teachers and job placement professionals can take advantage of the services of the National Young Worker Safety Resource Center. This center—with offices at the Education Development Center, Inc in Newton, MA and the Labor Occupational Health Program in Berkeley, California—is funded by OSHA to use a train-the-trainer model to promote the safety of young workers. The Center primarily serves California and the Northeast states.

Young Worker Safety Resource Center staff train a master trainer in each state to use the Safe Work/Safe Workers curriculum, a three-hour workshop for high school students originally developed by EDC and the OHSP. The master trainer then uses the curriculum to train teachers, job placement professionals, employers, and anyone else interested in helping teens the skills they need to be safe at work. The Center provides copies of the curriculum to those who participate in the training, and offers a small stipend to teachers and others who actually deliver the workshop to students.

The training is free, hands-on, informative, and fun. For information on upcoming trainings, or more information about the National Young Worker Safety Resource Center, contact

Chris Miaci, EDC
55 Chapel St
Newton, MA 02458
phone: 617-618-2238
email: cmiaci@edc.org

Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project is a project of the Occupational Health Surveillance Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Teens at Work is funded by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
Violence in the Workplace: What Teens and their Employers Need to Know

By Lisa McCarthy and Marc Diamond, MDPH
Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services (with contributions from Beatriz Pazos)

Did you know?

• Each year in the US nearly 1 million individuals become victims of violent crime while working (U.S. Department of Justice, 1994).
• Homicide is the leading cause of death in the workplace for women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001).
• Homicide is the leading cause of work-related death among 16- and 17-year-olds (NIOSH, 2002).
• Violent crime in the workplace results in the loss of 1,751,100 days of work each year, with over $55 million in lost wages annually (U.S. Department of Justice, 1994).
• Among working teens surveyed in one large Massachusetts high school, 26% reported having been verbally assaulted at work, 10% reported being sexually harassed, and 11% reported being physically assaulted on the job (Personal communication with K. Rauscher, 2002).

Workplace violence includes physical and sexual violence, stalking, threats of violence, verbal abuse and sexual harassment. It can involve current or former employers, employees, coworkers, visitors, contractors, and customers. Violence of any kind can leave a person feeling vulnerable, fearful, angry, uncomfortable, embarrassed, and humiliated. Physical and/or emotional injury may occur, with devastating and long-lasting effects. Under state and federal regulations, employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace for employees.

Many teens work in industries at high-risk for robbery and other violence, such as retail trade and service industries (Current Population Survey). Characteristics of workplaces that are particularly vulnerable to violence include:

• Contact with customers or clients;
• Access to cash;
• Unsecured working environment; and
• Late-night operation (National Consumers League) 2002.

Working alone is another risk factor, especially when combined with the above elements.

In Washington, minors are prohibited from working alone in service occupations past 8 pm without an adult present. Maine law prohibits minors from working alone in cash-based businesses, day or night.

As with other occupational risks, employers can take steps to identify hazards, and reduce the opportunity for and consequences of violence in the workplace.

OSHAs released its “Recommendations for Workplace Violence Prevention Programs in Late Night Retail Establishments” in 1998 to help employers keep their employees safe. There are five program components with steps employers can take to reduce risks (for more information visit the OSHA website at www.osha.gov):

1) Management Commitment and Employee Involvement
   • Create and share a policy of violence prevention.
   • Take all incidents seriously.
   • Work with outside agencies such as the police and landlords to improve physical safety.
2) Worksite Analysis
   • Perform a step-by-step look at the workplace to find existing and potential hazards.
   • Review records and past incidents.
   • Workplace security analysis
     • Reduce the risk of robbery.
     • Increase the effort that a perpetrator must expend.
     • Increase risks to the perpetrator.
     • Reduce the rewards to the perpetrator.
3) Hazard Prevention and Control
   • Increase visibility and lighting.
   • Increase the number of workers at night.
   • Use drop safes.
   • Limit access to areas of the establishment.
   • Install video surveillance equipment.
   • Keep minimal cash in register.
   • Lock doors when not open.
   • Establish emergency procedures, systems of communication, and training.
4) Training
   • Train all staff on potential security hazards and procedures to protect themselves.
5) Evaluation
   • Keep records of all injuries, incidents, policies, trainings. Prompt, effective responses to potentially violent situations, including sexual harassment, promote workers safety, improve retention, and can reduce employer liability. It is extremely important to respond to the potential for violence before an incident occurs.

If a young worker is harassed or threatened at work, s/he should take the following steps:

• Be clear about personal boundaries;
• Document all forms of harassment or threats including dates, locations, actions, statements, and any witnesses;
• Get support from family, friends, a supervisor, a union, an employee assistance program, or another resource listed below;
• Consider filling a complaint with the employer, or with the police if the employer is unresponsive; and
• Consider filling a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and/or through the courts.

The resources below can provide support to teens who have experienced workplace violence, as well as to their employers.

Resources for Teens and Their Employers Concerned About Violence in the Workplace:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), 617-338-0500 (voice): state agency for filing complaints of sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination.
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), 1-800-669-EEOC (voice/ 1-800-840-3302 (TDD): federal agency for filing complaints of sexual harassment and other forms of employment-related discrimination.

MA Office of Victim Assistance (MOVA) 617-727-5200 (voice): independent state agency that advocates for and assists victims of crime.

National News Flash – Recommended Changes in Jobs Considered Off-Limits for Youth

Both state and federal child labor laws prohibit young workers from working in certain high hazard jobs. However, the federal and many state child labor laws have remained largely unchanged for decades. See below for list of jobs currently prohibited for youth less than 18 years old in Massachusetts.) Experts have recommended that the list of prohibited activities be updated to reflect changes in patterns of youth employment and new knowledge about occupational health and safety risks. The U.S. Department of Labor commissioned the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to review the scientific literature on job hazards and make recommendations regarding changes in the list of prohibited work activities for youth. In July 2002, the U.S Department of Labor released the NIOSH report, which recommends a number of changes in the federal list of jobs considered too dangerous for youth. For example, NIOSH recommends prohibiting youth less than 18 years old from employment in garbage collection, construction and at heights greater than 6 feet. For a copy of the report, contact the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at 1-800-352-9527 (voice) or 1-800-352-6987 (TDD).

Persons under 18 years old may NOT:

Drive a vehicle or forklift
Use meat slicers or power-driven bakery machines
Work 10 feet or more above ground or water
Handle, serve or sell alcoholic beverages
Use circular or ban saws, guillotine shears or box crushers
Use power-driven woodworking machines
Use power-driven hoisting apparatus
Use power-driven paper-products machines
Use power-driven metal-forming, punching or shearing machines
Use buffing or polishing equipment
Manufacture brick, tile or kindred products
Manufacture or store explosives
Work in wrecking, demolition, shipbreaking or excavation
Work slaughtering, packing or processing meat
Work in roofing, railway or excavation operations
Work in foundry or around blast furnaces
Work manufacturing phosphorous matches
Work where they are exposed to radioactive substances
Work as a firefighter or engineer on a boat
Oil or clean hazardous machinery in motion

This list is a compilation of jobs prohibited by either state or federal child labor laws. There are some exceptions for student learners in school sponsored programs, and there are different restrictions that apply to youth employed in agriculture. There are additional restrictions for youth less than 16 years of age.