



IHSA supports safety training for young workers

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Young workers are often eager to learn and bring new ideas and energy to a workplace, but they can also be exposed to greater risks than other workers. Without the proper safety training, young workers (defined as being under the age of 25) may not only fail to recognize dangers to their health and safety but also feel hesitant about asking questions.

Although young workers make up only 13 per cent of the workforce, they account for about 16 per cent of all allowed Schedule 1 WSIB lost-time injury claims. And according to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, new and young workers in Ontario are three times more likely to be injured during their first month on the job than at any other time. It is crucial to give health and safety training to young workers before they even set foot on a worksite.

To help reduce the number of incidents and injuries among young workers, IHSA sponsors and supports a variety of youth-focused programs. Some of these include Future Building; the Skills Ontario Competition and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Student Conference; the Toronto District School Board's STEP to Construction program; and the Career Foundation Arborist Ground Worker Training program. IHSA also offers a Line Crew Ground Support Training program at Cambrian College, and a Powerline Apprenticeship program at both Cambrian and St. Clair Colleges. Through these initiatives, IHSA reaches some 33,000 young people across Ontario every year.

Today's young workers are tomorrow's safety leaders

IHSA's message to young workers is simple: all workers have rights and responsibilities in the workplace. Three rights are prescribed in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*: the right to know, the right to participate, and the right to refuse.

Although IHSA tries to instill a shared sense of responsibility in all workers, young workers in particular need to know that they shouldn't stay silent when they see something questionable or dangerous in the workplace. By supporting youth programs across Ontario, IHSA seeks to empower young workers to become part of a growing voice of young people who want to be part of the change for healthier and better informed workplaces.

"Reaching young and vulnerable workers is a key, strategic initiative of IHSA for preventing workplace incidents—now and in the future," says IHSA President and CEO, Enzo Garritano. "A large part of IHSA's safety message is that everyone has a role to play in health and safety, and if we can engrain that sense of responsibility from the beginning of their career, these students can become those safety leaders of the future."

IHSA's Line Crew Ground Support program

IHSA's Line Crew Ground Support program is a 15-week job readiness program based at Cambrian College in Sudbury and intended for Indigenous youth. The 97 per cent employment rate for those who have completed the course proves there is a demand for safety-conscious young workers in Ontario's job market. The graduates are mentored by IHSA trainers, and they complete the program with a long list of training certificates, including WHMIS, Traffic Control, Defensive Driving, Mobile Crane Operator, Working at Heights, Ladder Handling, and Rescue Practices, to name only a few.

Recently, Hydro One Transmission Lines and the Canadian Union of Skilled Workers (CUSW) have committed to the employment of seven graduates of IHSA's Line Crew Ground Support program. "The students receive a significant amount of important training in that course," says Rob Houser, Union Steward for CUSW. "Having this basic knowledge before working in the field is something that employers are starting to really appreciate because it gives the new hire a head start to being successful and safe in the trade. Knowledge is key. Safety is everything in this trade."



Young workers see the benefits of safety training

After completing the IHSA training program with the Toronto District School Board's STEP to Construction, many of the students are eager to pull out their wallets and show off their valuable new credentials. They are certainly aware of the benefits of this training and are grateful to receive it. For them, safety training means not only checking a box on a job application but also being a part of the changing culture of improved safety for all workers.

And for IHSA, that signals a meaningful improvement in Ontario's overall safety culture, today and in the future.

How IHSA can help

If you are planning to hire young workers for the summer, or any time of year, contact IHSA to see how we can help your business in the health and safety training for young and vulnerable workers. If you are with a youth organization looking to provide training to young workers, contact IHSA to see how we can work together to support safety training and awareness for youth.

Products and Training

- Poster: *Help new workers start right!* (PO01) Visit ihsa.ca and select Products.
- Course: Entry-Level Construction. Visit ihsa.ca, select Training, then Full Course List.

