

BAWU GUIDE TO HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK FOR YOUNG WORKERS

We may feel that because of their youth, that young people are fitter, stronger and therefore more capable of carrying out the heavier, more awkward tasks. The reality is that this is far from the truth.

Whilst health & safety provisions extend to everyone at work there are special restrictions that apply to young people in particular and the employer is obliged to make special efforts to ensure the health, safety & welfare of all young people aged 18 years and under.

This section is set out to highlight the legislative provisions for young people and our input as a trade union in protecting their rights.

Since the repeal of the Women and Young Persons Act, there have been two pieces of legislation brought onto the statute books that make specific provisions for young people at work namely, the **Management of Health & Safety Regulations 1992** and the **Health & Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1997**.

Coupled with the general responsibilities of the **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974** and the restrictions placed on employers of young people by the **Working Time Directive**, we have the basis for a strong risk reduction programme.

The employer must conduct **special risk assessments** for people under the age of 18 besides the normal risk assessments carried out under the regulations. These special risk assessments must take into account the following:

- **The inexperience of the worker, including their individual capability.**
- **Possible exposure to physical, biological and chemical hazards.**
- **The layout and the organisation of the workplace/workstation.**
- **The amount and the extent of the training needed including health & safety training.**
- **The work equipment that is to be used.**
- **The possible risks associated with dangerous activities or materials as defined by EU legislation, i.e. Animal slaughter, work in confined spaces such as silos, high voltage electricity.**



The BFAWU health & safety representatives play a full and active role in the reduction of potential hazards to young people in the following ways:

- They help the employer to identify all the potential risks.
- They assist the employer in identifying the control measures needed to eradicate or reduce the risks to the lowest possible level.
- They review the employer's assessments on a regular basis.
- They ensure that employer delivers adequate training in safe workplace procedures.
- They ensure that the employee is aware of the potential risks and the measures being made to reduce them.

Whilst the legislation is far from perfect, the BFAWU is committed to ensuring the highest standards of risk management in all the workplaces in which we are recognised (and those in which we are not).

We recognise that by protecting the young people of today, we are helping to develop a better safety culture for the future.

For further information contact your local Regional Office.

YOU'RE SAFER WITH THE BFAWU