

## Checklists for young people

Taken from the TUC's free leaflet Play Safe at Work

### 1. Working with machinery

- ✓ only operate machines you have been trained to use
- ✓ always follow the procedures that you have been trained in
- ✓ if guards are fitted, use them
- ✓ know how to stop your machine and how to disconnect it from the power supply
- ✓ wait until a machine is switched off, stopped and disconnected from the power supply before you maintain or clean it
- ✓ if there is something wrong with your machine, switch it off and call your supervisor straight away
- ✓ wear any gloves, goggles or other protective clothing provided (if there are none and you think there should be some, ask about it)
- ✓ electricity can cause severe burns and fires. It can also kill. It is swift, silent and deadly. Do not tamper with plugs, sockets or cables. If you think they are faulty, get help
- ✓ if you are under 18 you should not be driving any lift trucks, e.g. fork lifts

### 2. Moving stuff around

- ✓ avoid lifting if there are mechanical methods available, e.g. trolleys
- ✓ training must be given in any job where there are risks from manual handling
- ✓ wear any protective clothing provided, e.g. safety boots

- ✓ if you think a load is too heavy or in an unsafe condition, call your supervisor

### 3. RSI

*Lots of the same movement at work can cause damage to your body.*

*This is known as repetitive strain injury (RSI). Examples are checkout operators in a supermarket or keyboard users in an office.*

- ✓ identify any parts of your job where there is constant repetition
- ✓ check whether the area where you work could be adjusted to take more account of you as an individual, e.g. adjustable workstations to cater for your body shape
- ✓ take advantage of any work breaks to give your body a chance to recover from any strain it has been put under
- ✓ try to rotate the type of work you do

### 4. Bullying

*Most people have come across examples of this at school. Unfortunately, it can happen at work too. As a young worker you may be on the receiving end as part of some notion about 'licking you into shape'. Do not let yourself be bullied by managers or anyone else in the workplace. You have the right to respect as a worker and it should never be seen as just part of the job.*

*Remember:*

- ✓ keep a written record of any examples of bullying or harassment
- ✓ try to find someone who you feel comfortable with to talk about it
- ✓ report it to your supervisor. If it is the supervisor who is doing it, then go to the next level of management

## 5. Noise

Many workplaces are noisy. If noise levels are too high it can damage your hearing. If you go clubbing you will already know about 'ringing in the ears' which disappears after a while. The biggest problem is that noise over a long period of time causes permanent damage. You may not be aware of the damage until your hearing worsens and simply does not recover.

Remember:

- ✓ do not suffer in a noisy environment

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- ✓ follow any procedures for noise control

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- ✓ wear any protective hearing equipment that is provided

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## 6. Chemicals and asbestos

There are thousands of toxic substances used every day at work. They may affect you in different ways according to how much you are exposed to, how long for and the type of substance.

Just because you cannot smell or see something, it does not mean that it is not getting into your body. In some cases you will know it has, because you will get a quick effect like a headache or dizziness. In other cases you may get no immediate effect at all but it could still be doing you accumulated damage that will hit you later in life.

Remember:

- ✓ only use substances that you have been given information and training on

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- ✓ follow the procedures for safe use – if you are worried ask for the Safety Data Sheet which will explain any potential dangers

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- ✓ make sure you know what to do if there is a spillage or other emergency

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- ✓ wear any suitable protective clothing or equipment

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Asbestos dust is deadly. The dust gets into your lungs and can kill you twenty or thirty years later. The younger you are when you have your first exposure the more you could die of a lung disease before you hit middle age.

Asbestos is present in most buildings that were built more 25 years ago unless it has been stripped out in a safe way.

Remember:

- ✓ you should be informed by your employer about any possible asbestos where you work

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- ✓ if you suspect something contains asbestos inform your supervisor

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If you are still being asked to work in conditions that you think are potentially dangerous then seek further advice.

## 7. Slips and trips

This is the most common type of accident. Overcrowded conditions or where there are a lot of materials and liquids lying about will increase your chances of adding to the statistics. For example, the electric cables that often run across an office floor could be lying in wait for you.

Remember:

- ✓ report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor

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- ✓ record any accidents or near misses in the accident book

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- ✓ wear footwear that will help to prevent you slipping

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## 8. Stress and violence

Stress is now the most commonly reported problem at work. Starting a new job is stressful enough anyway without getting any more piled on you. Stress can be caused by lots of things but many stem from the way that your job is organised. Things like impossible workloads, boring or dangerous work can all make you wish you had never got the job. Do not fall for the old line that 'some stress is good for you'. Stress is different from pressure. Stress happens when there is too much pressure.

Remember:

- ✓ think about the kind of things that cause you stress at work

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- ✓ decide what things you can do something about

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- ✓ speak to someone you are confident in about the things that you cannot do anything about

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- ✓ agree possible solutions and who you could involve to try and achieve them

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Violence in the workplace has become more common too. Some jobs carry a much greater risk, particularly where there is contact with the public. Like bullying or stress, it should never be seen as just part of the job. Violence does not just cover physical attacks – it includes verbal abuse as well.

Remember:

- ✓ find out if your employer has any procedures in place for dealing with the violence – like training

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- ✓ record any incidents that have happened to you

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- ✓ seek advice and counselling to help you deal with any attacks

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