



International  
Labour  
Organization



**Safe Work for**

**outh Kit**

**HOW TO USE THE  
SAFE WORK FOR YOUTH KIT-USER'S GUIDE  
A GUIDANCE NOTE FOR  
EMPLOYERS & EMPLOYER ASSOCIATIONS  
IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY  
IN MYANMAR**

JUNE 2018

Safe Youth @ Work Project  
Myanmar Programme On the  
Elimination of Child Labour (My-PEC)

**USER'S GUIDE**



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## INTRODUCTION

This kit has been prepared for employers and employers' associations in the construction industry in Myanmar. It contains the following materials:

“**Keep them Safe**” a pamphlet for construction managers, supervisors and owners

“**Stay Safe**” fact sheets for different jobs young construction workers are likely to do

“**Guidance Note**” to suggest how these materials might be used in Myanmar

## Purpose

The goal of the Safe Work for Youth Kit is to help the Myanmar construction industry stay free of child labour and ensure that the younger workers at construction sites are safe from exploitative and dangerous work.

### Remember . . .

IF CHILDREN ARE WORKING WHO ARE UNDER THE LEGAL AGE (14) ...

**THEY ARE CHILD LABOUR!**

IF YOUTH UNDER 18 ARE EXPOSED TO SUBSTANTIAL PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK AT WORK ...

**THEY ARE CHILD LABOUR!**

YOUNG WORKERS ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE WORKERS AND SUFFER HIGH RATES OF WORKPLACE INJURIES ...

**YOUNG WORKERS NEED SPECIAL OSH PROTECTION!**



## Main Principles

- 1. All workplaces have hazards – either in the work itself or in the working conditions. Poor working conditions can make even the safest job tasks hazardous.**
- 2. By identifying these hazards ahead of time, it is possible to substantially reduce them. reducing risks to an acceptable level is the responsibility of the employer**
- 3. young workers have special vulnerabilities. They also have special rights that protect their health and safety**
- 4. Young workers need to be shown how to recognize hazards and how to protect themselves**

One of the basic principles underlying Safe Work for Youth is that the employer is legally responsible for occupational health and safety (including protection from psychological abuse) of her/his workers -- and this includes young workers. Training is the first step in ensuring that young workers are safe, but all too often, young apprentices, trainees, and short-term employees are overlooked or miss training. But training is not a one-time event. The site manager or employer should try to make young workers feel comfortable to ask questions of older workers and experienced foremen throughout their workday. Even if the young worker misses a formal training session, on-the-job training and mentoring can help to keep them safe at work.

Another core message is that an enterprise which is careful to protect its young workers is also an enterprise which tends to be more efficient and productive. This saves money. Most important, a workplace that has consciously been made safe for young workers becomes safe for adult workers as well. Fewer accidents among all workers = a win-win situation!

A third basic principle is that youth have a right to know the risks, as well as their rights and responsibilities (the 3 R's!). Providing information to youth is never the first or only component of a campaign to protect young workers, but it is an essential component. Many surveys in developed countries show that young workers are not receiving the training they need to be safe at work. They should be getting this information at school, in vocational training programmes, as well as on the job.

Learning important safety and health information early in their working lives will help young people contribute to a "culture of prevention" which is the new approach in occupational health and safety. Well-informed workers are better able to assist the owners and employers in keeping the site safe and productive.





## THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Worldwide, the construction industry has the reputation for being one of the more dangerous places to work. There are several reasons for this:

- Construction sites use large, heavy equipment and tools that cut, crush, mix or move.
- The structures being built can be unstable. Barriers may be flimsy or not yet in place over openings for window, stairs, and foundations. Falls from the roof or scaffolding account for 50-70% of worker deaths in some countries.
- Because construction sites are temporary, the normal policies, procedures and protections that you would expect may not be put in place.
- Construction sites often kick up a lot of dust, some of which may contain asbestos, silica and other dangerous metals or contaminants. They are also notorious for noise and vibrations.
- The vast majority of fatalities on construction sites in developed countries involve immigrants or workers who are from ethnic minorities, some of whom are hampered by not being able to read safety warnings or not understanding instructions in the dominant language.
- In many countries, construction is poorly regulated. In spite of given citations for safety violations, firms do not correct their practices and receive only a minor fine, if any.
- Many construction workers do not belong to a union, which means that there is no safety rep on hand.
- Construction foreman often hire day laborers who are given little or no training.

Although infrastructure and construction projects have been growing rapidly in recent years, there is also a high level of competition in the industry which can result in pressures on contractors and site managers to take shortcuts to keep costs low.<sup>1</sup> This may mean even less surveillance than in other work. Most sites are never inspected until a worker is injured or killed.<sup>2</sup>

Another consideration to keep in mind is that danger does not stop at the gate of the construction site. Construction can have a magnet effect, luring under-age children to drop school and come to work there. After hours, it also may put young workers in contact with adult behaviors such as drinking or expose them to off-site sexual abuse.

Construction danger is also determined by the location of the work. Most sites are open, thus exposing the young worker to sun (or alternatively to cold or inclement weather). A wet site, such as a river bed, poses danger of drowning or exposure to water-borne diseases.

Finally, construction requires a lot of different types of materials which are prepared elsewhere and then brought to the site. It is easy to ignore the fact that it is often children and youth who are breaking stones into gravel or making bricks for the infrastructure projects. But the commercial ethics and codes of practice which are now emerging worldwide hold that the employing company must also consider work and working conditions in its subcontractors, and be accountable for these workers' welfare as well as those on site.

1 Ladbury, Cotton and Jennings: Implementing Labour Standards in Construction: A Sourcebook, Loughborough University, 2003 quoted in Blagborough, "Infrastructure and Construction Projects – The Hidden Cost to Children" Background Paper for SCF meeting 2011.

2 "Worker Safety Advocates Unveil Alarming Findings in "Price of Life: 2015 Report on Construction Fatalities in NYC" NYCOSH | May 11, 2015.



## OVERVIEW OF MATERIALS

### “Keep Them Safe” (for construction employers)

“Keep them Safe” is for owners of construction companies, supervisors and site managers. It includes:

#### **General Guidelines**

This part presents the basic rules and principles that concern young workers who are above the legal age for employment in Myanmar (age 14) but under age 18.

#### **Specific Suggestions**

This section looks at specific areas that often pose problems for young workers and provides tips for what can be done about them. The topics are:

- Work Contracts
- Times & hours
- Harassment & violence
- Stress
- Materials handling
- Equipment & tools
- Hazardous substances
- Light, noise & temperature
- Workers support facilities

#### **Helpful Resources**

This section lists where the employer or site manager can go for help in case s/he needs further information.

#### **Checklist**

This pull-out sheet is meant to be used regularly when making an occupational health and safety inspection of the worksite. Checklists are a useful tool for identifying hazards. Although usually filled out by the manager, they are especially good when used in participatory way along with the workers.

#### **Danger stickers**

A sheet of adhesive stickers has been provided which the employer can place on equipment or chemical products or even sections of the worksite which should be ‘off limits’ to young workers because of their danger. It is a light-hearted way of providing a warning. A good activity to conduct with young workers new on the job is to do a walk-through of the work site with the young worker and his/her direct supervisor, pointing out possible hazards and affixing the stickers.

## “Stay Safe” (for youth working in construction)

“Stay Safe” is designed for young people working on a construction site. It includes:

### **“Five Ways to Stay Safe” brochure**

*Five Ways* is a general introduction on safety and health for youth. It is intended to be used along with the occupation-specific *Fact Sheets*. Because its underlying theme is young workers’ rights, it is important to have the content and language reviewed for cultural appropriateness. Those who are distributing this booklet should consider:

- What is the best way for young Myanmar workers to ask questions about a potentially dangerous task or chemical?
- Who should they turn to for training or to seek clarification about how to perform their jobs?
- Who would be best to support them when dealing with a delicate subject such as violence or sexual harassment?

### **“Fact Sheets”**

The *Fact Sheets* are 2-page flyers that are cheap to produce, easy to distribute and quick to read. They include:

- Some of the tasks that young people do when they are hired for this type of work.
- Top four dangers that young workers are concerned about in this industry.
- The laws in Myanmar and internationally that protect young workers, which indicates the line between child labour and proper youth employment.
- The responsibilities of the employer in providing a safe place to work.
- True stories about workplace safety incidents.

## STEPS FOR USING THE KIT

### Step 1. Get organized

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- ➔ **Partner?** Are you launching Safe Work for Youth all on your own or as part of a larger campaign with other companies or agencies? Doing it together with others is a good way to have an impact.
- ➔ **Purpose?** What do you hope to achieve? The main advantage is that your construction site will have fewer accidents that are costly in time and money. But there are other advantages as well. Even small firms will find Safe Work for Youth useful as a way to create a good name or reputation for their firm or as a starting point for worker training.

### Step 2. Prepare the materials

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#### *Fit them to the site*

- ➔ Go to the construction site (memory often misses things, it helps to actually be on site) and make a list of all the tasks and activities that are being done there. Include start-up tasks at the beginning of the day too as well as those at the end, such as cleaning up and putting tools away. Include also the little jobs such as running errands, purchasing or stacking.
- ➔ Now, put a red line through all tasks and activities that you think might be too heavy or too dangerous for younger workers as well as tasks and activities that take place in areas of your site which are isolated, contaminated, or dangerous for some other reason.

#### **This is your initial “OK” / “Not OK” list for young workers**

#### *Fit them to the workers*

- ➔ Can they all read? If not, include a sketch, cartoon or picture of each task that is “Not OK”.
- ➔ Do they all speak the same language? If not, use the picture version or prepare materials in each language spoken on site.
- ➔ Can you afford to print a copy for each worker? If not, make them into posters instead.
- ➔ Will the workers obey? The best way to get young workers to comply is to have them participate in preparing the guidelines on how to do construction work safely and see how this benefits them.
- ➔ Do you know what the young workers are most concerned about? Sit down with a group of young workers and review the task list with them to see if there is anything that has been missed. Ask them about the dangers they face on the construction site: the most serious, the most common, the most likely to happen. Be sure these are included in the materials.

#### *Add local information*

- ➔ Where is the first aid box located on the construction site?
- ➔ How far is the nearest medical center or clinic?
- ➔ What is the name and contact information of supervisors or other responsible persons in case of emergency?



## Step 3. Disseminate & Train

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- ➔ Provide site managers, supervisors, and the owner/employer with copies of “Keep Them Safe”.
- ➔ Provide each young worker with the “Stay Safe Fact Sheet”.
- ➔ Use the materials when training new workers and provide each of them with a copy of either “Keep Them Safe” or “Stay Safe”, depending on their role.<sup>3</sup>

Even though the packets are targeted to a specific group, as for example *Stay Safe* which is targeted to youth, it is likely that some of the information will be new to other groups as well. Also, by providing the whole kit to other employers, chambers of commerce and similar organizations, and asking them to pass on relevant pieces to their members and their younger workers will have the added benefit of providing a wide range of adults with useful information about child labour laws, occupational health and safety, and contacts and resources. This also creates an important connection; it is essential that young people know they can turn to an adult for further information or assistance.

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<sup>3</sup> For training courses, it is helpful to have an occupational health and safety institution or medical facility with experience in occupational health to serve as a back-up when questions arise.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYERS TO CONSIDER

Paper alone seldom changes people. So it is good to think of using *Safe Work for Youth* materials as part of a broader campaign to protect young workers. Employers and owners of construction firms can be a potent force for change because they have a reputation for being practical and sensible. If they take the lead, others will follow. An employer-led campaign might include:

### Gathering information

Facts are the starting point for convincing people to take seriously the occupational health and safety of young persons. Employers can make an invaluable contribution by documenting and even reporting on site incidents and injuries.

### Strengthening laws

Many people – even officials – do not know what the laws are that provide protection to young workers. Oftentimes there are gaps or inconsistencies between local laws and the international child labour standards. Strengthening and enforcing child labour and occupational health and safety laws gives the necessary foundation for later activities. Do this by:

- Supporting regulations that cover all main aspects of occupational health and safety relevant to youth including domestic service, psycho-social risks, night work, combined hours of work and schooling, and new threats such as HIV-AIDS.

providing information to labour inspectors, police, and government officials on the special vulnerabilities and rights of young workers, and the work that employers are doing to protect young workers.

- Comparing the laws in Myanmar to the official “hazardous child labour list” developed in accordance with requirements in ILO Conventions No. 138 and 182. (See Appendix for examples of child labour laws governing hazardous tasks and hours.)
- Evaluating how well existing laws are being enforced and whether enterprises that continue to employ young people under 18 in hazardous conditions are penalized.
- Using data on workplace injuries and deaths of youth to calculate the cost to the construction industry, as a way of getting the attention of key actors.



## Raising Awareness

Make others conscious of their roles in protecting young workers. Do this by:

- Carrying out a public information campaign, perhaps in connection with another event such as World Day Against Child Labour.
- Urging occupational health be included in primary and second school and vocational training courses
- Reporting any young worker injuries on the construction site to the ministry of health.
- Offering employers training that shows how to increase productivity by improving young workers' health and safety; the ILO programme entitled "WISE" (Workplace Improvement for Small Enterprises) is an excellent example and there are trainers all over the world.
- Making presentations to meetings of the employers' associations, business groups, chambers of commerce, etc. Combine information about young workers with other information they are interested in, such as new laws, health and safety regulations, new resources, international trade and commerce information for exported goods.
- Providing other employers of youth with posters to put up in their workplaces and brochures, such as Five Ways to hand out to young workers.





## **FURTHER INFORMATION**



## ANNEX : INTERNATIONAL LAWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### ILO Recommendation No. 190

Children below 18 should not be engaged in:

**(Section 2):**

- (c) (iv) hidden work situations, in which girls are at special risk;

**(Section 3):**

- (a) work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- (b) work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
- (c) work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- (d) work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
- (e) work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

### ILO Convention No. 167

**Article 2**

- (a) The term **construction** covers:
  - (i) building, including excavation and the construction, structural alteration, renovation, repair, maintenance (including cleaning and painting) and demolition of all types of buildings or structures;
  - (ii) civil engineering, including excavation and the construction, structural alteration, repair, maintenance and demolition of, for example, airports, docks, harbours, inland waterways, dams, river and avalanche and sea defence works, roads and highways, railways, bridges, tunnels, viaducts and works related to the provision of services such as communications, drainage, sewerage, water and energy supplies.

### National laws (other countries)

**Construction-Related work prohibited to those under 18 years of age**

- Driving a forklift
- Working at heights greater than 10 feet off the ground or floor level
- Loading, operating, or unloading of paper balers and compactors
- Working alone past 8 p.m. without supervision by someone 18 years or older who is on the premises at all times



- Roofing: all work on or around a roof
- Working at heights greater than 10 feet off the ground
- Wrecking and demolition
- Elevators, hoists, and cranes
- Flagging
- Trenching or excavating
- Boilers or in engine rooms
- Power-driven woodworking machines
- Earth-moving machines
- Explosives
- Mining
- Manufacturing of brick, tile, and similar products
- Jobs where exposures require the use of respiratory protection or hearing protection

## Additional prohibited duties for minors under 16

- Driving an automobile (17-year-olds may drive only under very limited circumstances)
- Any power-driven machinery
- Construction
- Loading or unloading trucks
- Transportation, warehouse, storage, and work around conveyors
- Ladders and scaffolds, including window washing

## Hours and days youth can work

Some countries provide the following restrictions concerning the working times for youth:

Hours and Schedules Minors are Permitted to Work in Non-Agricultural Jobs					
	Hours/day	Hours/Week	Days/Week	Start time	Ending time
14–15 year-olds					
School weeks	3 hours (8 hrs on Sat & Sun)	16 hours	6 days	7 a.m.	7 p.m.
Non-school weeks	8 hours	40 hours	6 days	7 a.m.	7 p.m.
16–17 year-olds					
School weeks	4 hours (8 hours Fri–Sun)	20 hours	6 days	7 a.m.	10 p.m. (Midnight Friday–Saturday)
School weeks with special permission	6 hours (8 hours Fri–Sun)	28 hours	6 days	7 a.m.	10 p.m. (Midnight Friday–Saturday)
Non-school weeks	8 hours	48 hours	6 days	5 a.m.	Midnight



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