

1 HOW TO KEEP TEENS SAFE AT WORK

Do you hire teens for summer employment? Know the ins and outs when hiring a younger workforce.

3 USING THE RIGHT TOOLS CAN SAVE MONEY AND PREVENT INJURY

Avoid an injury claim by trying these safe tools from a specialist at the U. of Wisconsin, Madison.

4 WHEN HEAT STRESS AFFECTS YOUR WORKERS

When the temperatures rise, so does the risk of heat stress. Follow these tips from an expert at the U. of Delaware.

THE ONE-STOP SOURCE FOR GREEN INDUSTRY SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

THE BottomLine

VOLUME 2  
NUMBER 3  
May/June  
2006

American Nursery &  
Landscape Association  
1000 Vermont Avenue  
NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202.789.2900  
Fax: 202.789.1893  
www.anla.org

## Keep Teen Workers Safe on the Job



by Shannon DeCamp  
TechneTrain, Inc.

As summer gets into high gear, some teens might be knocking on your door for summer employment. It is an unfortunate fact that children do get injured, and even killed, in the workplace. Approximately 80 percent of teens are employed at some point before they leave high school. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimates that over 210,000 American children suffer occupational injuries every year, and over 70,000 of these injuries are serious enough to warrant emergency room treatment. Teens are consistently injured at higher rates than adults, even though they are restricted from the most hazardous jobs.

Some frequent causes of injury to teen workers include:

- Unsafe equipment
- Stressful conditions
- Inadequate safety training
- Inadequate supervision
- Dangerous work that is illegal or inappropriate for youth
- Being in a hurry

Deaths of teens in the workplace result most often from:

- Homicide
- Driving or traveling as passengers in motor-vehicles
- Machine-related accidents
- Electrocution
- Falls

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 includes protections for young people ages 14 to 17 years who enter the workforce. Child Labor Regulation No. 3, 29 CFR Part 570, Subpart C, limits the hours and the times of day that youth may work. Both federal and state laws govern the employment of young workers, and when both are applicable, the law with the stricter standard must be obeyed.

It is the employer's responsibility under the law to be aware of and to obey all regulations pertaining to youth employment. In addition, the employer must ensure that all workers, including teens, have an understanding of safe work practices and perform their jobs accordingly. Special consideration must be given to young workers due to their lack of experience, which can negatively impact their judgment and ability to assess hazardous situations.

There are restrictions and/or prohibitions for individuals under the age of 18 related to performing specific tasks, including, but not limited to: driving a motor-vehicle, using many types of power-driven machinery (lawn mowers, lawn trimmers and weed cutters), and participating in trenching/excavating operations.

*continued on page 2*



Insurance specialists for the horticultural industry™  
Produced in partnership with Hortica

### Teen workers - continued from page 1

Violators of youth employment provisions may be subject to a monetary civil penalty of up to \$11,000 for each minor employed in violation. In addition, willful youth employment violators may face criminal prosecution and be fined up to \$10,000. Under current law, a second conviction may result in imprisonment.

The following steps should be taken to ensure that you are in compliance with regulations pertaining to youth employment:

- Ensure that equipment operated by teens is both legal and safe for them to use.
- Label equipment that young workers are not allowed to operate. The OSHA *YouthRules!* Website has downloadable stickers available to place on hazardous equipment to alert all workers that no one 18 years old or younger may operate the equipment. Log onto the Web site [www.youthrules.dol.gov/posters.htm](http://www.youthrules.dol.gov/posters.htm).

Provide training to ensure that adolescents recognize hazards and are competently trained in safe work practices. Be mindful of the unique aspects of communicating with teens when performing this training, which should include how to prepare for fires, accidents, violent situations, and what to do if they get injured.

- Inform young workers that if they do get injured, they have the right to file a claim to cover their medical benefits and some of their lost work time.

Keep your young workers and your business safe and healthy!

**OSHA Targets Teens and Landscaping**  
OSHA has a teen summer job safety page titled "Landscaping: Plant Your Feet on Safe Ground." The specific pages are related to teens and landscaping safety. You'll find topics on sun/UV heat, cuts and punctures to the eye, pesticides, electrical hazards, noise and other general safety tips. The information is also available in Spanish. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/landscaping/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/landscaping/index.html).

## CHECKLIST

- It is the employer's responsibility under the law to be aware and to obey all regulations pertaining to youth employment.
- There are restrictions and/or prohibitions for individuals younger than age 18 related to performing specific tasks, such as driving a motor-vehicle.
- Ensure that the equipment operated by teens is both legal and safe for them to use. Label equipment that younger workers are not allowed to use.

*Shannon DeCamp is Client Services Manager for TechneTrain, Inc. This is only an overview of teen worker safety. For a full line of training programs and reference manuals with detailed information on these and other OSHA compliance requirements for the landscape industry, visit [www.technetrainonline.com](http://www.technetrainonline.com), or contact TechneTrain, Inc. at (800) 852-8314.*

PRESIDENT  
Buzz Bertolero

PRESIDENT-ELECT  
Joanne Kostecky

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
Robert J. Dolibois, CAE

EDITOR  
Laura Coyne

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Amanda Flynn

*The Bottom Line* is published bimonthly by the American Nursery & Landscape Association as a service to its grower, landscape specialist, garden center retailer, landscape distribution and supplier members. Readers are welcome to send comments, questions and copy for publication consideration to: [anlabottomline@yahoo.com](mailto:anlabottomline@yahoo.com) and address changes to [newsletters@anla.org](mailto:newsletters@anla.org). Phone 202.789.2900; fax 202.789.1893. Copy is accepted continuously, with absolute deadlines for particular issues. Publishing of *The Bottom Line* is partially underwritten by support from Hortica, insurance specialists for the horticultural industry.

## Teen worker brochure available from ASSE

To help address teen safety in the workforce, the American Society of Safety Engineers has developed an educational insert titled "Teens at Work: Safety First!" The insert is being distributed to students in 95,000 high schools nationwide. Teenagers have a higher rate of work-related injuries, according to ASSE.

The most common job-related injury for first-time workers younger than age 18 is muscle sprain or strain. And trips and falls, eye strain and excessive noise are just some of the other hazards teens face at work. Common questions business owners and teens should ask themselves, according to

ASSE and [www.occupationalhazards.com](http://www.occupationalhazards.com), include:

- What are the physical demands of the job, and what kind of safety gear is needed?
- What workplace hazards exist? (noise, chemicals, etc.)
- What type of safety training can a teen expect?
- Is there a worker safety policy and an emergency plan in place?

For a copy of the safety insert or the "Workplace Safety Guide for Young Workers" brochure, contact ASSE at [customerservice@asse.org](mailto:customerservice@asse.org) or 847-699-2929.

# Work Tools That Will Make Your Business Easier and Safer

Safety resources and equipment, while generally acknowledged as positive workplace interventions, are not always put to proper use. Tractor rollover protective structures (ROPS) are a good example of this. In the typical tractor rollover, a tractor becomes unstable and then tips over to the side or rear, pinning, crushing and sometimes killing the operator. For more than twenty years, the manufacturers have promoted two-post ROPS—or crush-proof ROPS cabs for tractors—yet a survey conducted in Wisconsin showed that 67 percent of tractors still lacked rollover protection.

The chance of injury or death may seem remote when compared to the daily realities of producing high-quality nursery crops and managing workers efficiently. But providing them with the safe tools and equipment and retrofits that they need to get the job done in a high-quality, timely fashion is a wise investment.

## Invest in the right tools for the job

There are numerous ways to invest in safety equipment and improvements that have an immediate, positive effect on a nursery or landscape operation's bottom line. If a tool or safety modification helps get the job done more quickly, it can save labor costs and often pays for itself in a relatively short span of time. Added bonuses are the potential to reduce medical costs and to prevent lost work time resulting from injuries.

One good example of a safer, more profitable tool is a one-person hitching system that allows a tractor driver to hitch up to a wagon without ever leaving the tractor seat. Hitching manually is both,

time-consuming and dangerous, involving precise maneuvering to line up the drawbar and the wagon tongue. It also places a worker at risk of crushing or mangling fingers or becoming pinned between the tractor and the wagon (or any other vehicle being towed). With a one-

---

*“Even a simple, low-cost tool can help reduce the amount of time workers spend stooping or doing repetitive tasks. A back injury claim carries a cost of at least \$15,000.”*

---

person hitch, you can back up to a wagon until a coupling device locks it in place. Unhitching is simply done by pulling a release cable.

“It’s fast,” says Paul Morlock of Laws Nursery in Hastings, Minn. “I don’t have to keep climbing on and off the tractor, particularly with a loaded wagon where you have to be just perfect to get it to line up and slip in a pin.” Field trials by the University of Wisconsin’s Healthy Farmers, Healthy Profits Project found that hitching with the one-person hitch, using the same experienced worker, was 91 percent faster than without it. Workers save, on average, a minute per hitch/unhitch cycle. Every little bit of time saved adds up to increased efficiency and profits—and improved safety.

## Increase worker efficiency without sacrificing safety

Even a simple, low-cost tool that can help reduce the amount of time workers spend stooping or doing repetitive tasks can lead to increased worker safety. Carrie Portz, of Avant Nursery in McFarland, Wis., found that using a one-legged stool, which straps around the waist, reduces the amount of



by Marcia Miquelon  
Outreach Specialist  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

stooping or kneeling workers must do to weed, take cuttings, prune low-growing plants or collect seed. “We’ve all been using it, particularly when we weed containers. I wish I always had it with me because there are many times when I want to sit down.” Since the stool straps snugly around the waist, it leaves

workers’ hands free for their specific task. When workers take fewer breaks due to fatigue or soreness, the \$20-\$30 tool can pay for itself in a short period of time.

It’s true that the costs associated with injuries are high indeed and can seriously affect a business’s bottom line. A single back injury claim carries a cost of at least \$15,000. Even injuries that require no lost work time, such as minor sprains and strains, can cost hundreds of dollars. Tools that increase workers’ speed or efficiency while simultaneously reducing their injury risks truly are profitable investments.

*The Healthy Farmers, Healthy Profits Project is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and promotes the adoption of more efficient, safer tools by nursery growers. For more information, go to <http://bse.wisc.edu/hfhp> or contact Marcia Miquelon at (608) 262-1054.*

## Outdoor Workers at Risk for Heat Stress

As the temperatures rise, so do the worries about heat stress for your employees. Working outside often has its perks, including fresh air and sunshine. As summer heat and humidity increase, however, outdoor workers should seek out air-conditioned comfort whenever possible—for safety's sake. An increase in body temperature of two degrees can affect mental functioning, and an increase of five degrees can result in serious illness or death. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are the two most dangerous forms of heat stress. Learn to recognize the signs of these two illnesses to prevent serious health consequences.

When suffering from heat exhaustion, an individual may have a body temperature of 102 degrees, may feel dizzy or faint, and will sweat profusely. Heat exhaustion requires treatment to replace fluids and cool down the body. Get the victim out of the sun and indoors, and call a physician.

Heat stroke victims, on the other hand, are at risk of death. Victims lose the ability to regulate their body temperature through perspiration and run a fever of 105 degrees

or more. In extreme cases, victims can lose consciousness or slip into a coma. Heat stroke victims require immediate medical attention.

Acclimatization is an important step in controlling heat stress. Employees can gradually get used to higher temperatures, but it can take several days or weeks. Follow a schedule of work-and-rest cycles to prevent overdoing an activity.

### Drink plenty of fluids

When employees are working in the heat, it's important that they drink 5 to 7 ounces of water every 15 to 20 minutes to keep fluid in the body. As for food, eat a light lunch. Heavy meals reduce the body's ability to get rid of heat by redirecting blood flow to the digestive tract and away from skin surface. Other hazards await workers who labor under a hot sun. Working in a hot environment lowers mental alertness and physical performance. Heat can cause workers to lose focus and become irritable—an especially hazardous state if the worker is operating heavy machinery.



by Ron Jester, P.E.  
Cooperative Extension Specialist  
University of Delaware, Georgetown

To minimize the risks, rotate duties among several workers so no one person is subject to the same strenuous work throughout the day. Those who allow themselves to become dehydrated, or are obese, under the influence of alcohol, or suffer from lack of sleep are at greater risk of heat illness.

Other factors contributing to heat stress are advanced age and taking medications, such as antihistamines, diuretics and tranquilizers.

For more safety information about heat stress and a Humiture Chart, you can contact Ron Jester at [rcjester@udel.edu](mailto:rcjester@udel.edu) or at 302-856-7303.

- American Nursery & Landscape Association
- 1000 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 300
- Washington, DC 20005