

# Taking Action for a Safe Workplace

*Materials for English Language  
Learning Teachers*

**THE NEW YORK COMMITTEE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**



**&**

**MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK**



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- page 16 – by Jacob Ospa
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- page 31 – from *The Right to Understand: Linking Literacy to Health & Safety Training (1994)*, p. 135
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## Preface

Welcome to *Taking Action for A Safe Workplace*! This guide was produced in 2005 by the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH), a non-profit organization devoted to making the work environment safe for all of New York's workers. In 2011, the guide was updated and revised by staff at Make the Road New York with the support of funding from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor.

*Taking Action...* contains a set of lessons and materials about job safety issues for teachers of English Language Learners (ELL). In *Taking Action...*, ELL teachers will discover methods to help immigrant workers with limited English fluency to:

- identify and document hazards on their jobs
- understand their legal right to a safe workplace
- take steps to improve their working conditions
- find medical and legal help if they become injured or ill from their jobs.

### **Training**

*Taking Action...* is meant to be accompanied by a training session, in which ELL teachers are introduced to:

- basic principles of industrial hygiene (the applied science of identifying and controlling occupational hazards)
- OSHA, the federal law regulating workplace safety
- the New York State workers' compensation law
- organizations which advocate for worker safety and help injured workers
- resources containing additional information on job health and safety

*Taking Action...* also contains background notes to teachers about the information covered in the training session. Any ELL teacher who would like additional guidance in understanding the content of the material or in using a particular activity is encouraged to contact NYCOSH for assistance.

The first edition of *Taking Action...* was pilot tested with ELL teachers in three community-based organizations in New York City area. We hope to continue to update and revise the curriculum, and we look forward to receiving your input and to improving this document for others to use.

### **Approach**

*Taking Action...* is based on a popular education approach to teaching. This problem-solving approach invites participants to draw on their life experiences, ideas, and feelings in order to explore together issues of common concern, with the ultimate goal of taking action to change their lives - individually and collectively.

## **Structure**

Each topic covered in *Taking Action* contains one or more lessons of unequal length, depending on the time available to the teacher and the interest of the learners. The level of fluency required by the users varies from lesson to lesson, though, in general, we have attempted to reach mid-level beginners to intermediate level learners.

Each topic contains suggestions for contextualized grammar activities triggered by the content of the lesson. These activities can be supplemented with material from standard ELL grammar texts for additional practice.

Likewise, each topic has a listed of “Key Vocabulary / Words to Review.” These are lists of words that the teacher should be sure to define and encourage learners to use in the context of the lessons. For teachers of Spanish language students, translation of frequently used terms from English to Spanish, and Spanish to English can be found at: [www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance\\_assistance/spanish/osha\\_general\\_terms\\_ensp\\_freq.html](http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/spanish/osha_general_terms_ensp_freq.html). This resource can be useful for instruction of students whose primary language is Spanish.

Teachers are encouraged to keep track of vocabulary that arises in each lesson as it is taught, and adding to the list of key vocabulary for the next class cycle.

## **Background Materials and Technical Support**

Teachers are encouraged to review the OSHA website for additional information on workers’ rights to a safe work environment. Particularly useful is the Introduction to OSHA outline, found at [www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/teachingaids.html](http://www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/teachingaids.html). For those teaching Spanish-speaking learners, there are many resources available on the OSHA website in Spanish to aid learners.

## **Note to Teachers:**

For the purposes of this curriculum, it is important to use a broad definition of work to be inclusive of all learners, especially women and older adults. “Work” can include jobs that are not paid, such as homemaker, and jobs that are informal or where workers are often paid “off the books”, such as day laborers and domestic workers. In later topics that cover workplace rights, learners will be informed that only paid workers are covered by the laws discussed. Learners who are not currently doing paid work should also be encouraged to participate by talking about work they’ve done in the past, including jobs they held in their native countries.

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# TOPIC 1: Introduction to Job Health & Safety

## Topic Objectives

### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To identify hazardous working conditions in jobs held by immigrants
- To build a community of learners through sharing common work experiences

### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To familiarize Ls with terms such as **hazard, hazardous, safe** and **unsafe**
- To familiarize Ls with nouns that describe hazards such as **dust, chemicals, noise** and **lifting**

### **Language Objective:**

- To familiarize Ls with paired opposites (adjectives)

## Topic Activities

### **Introducing Work**

- Learners start talking about the work they and others do

### **Learning about Hazards**

- Learners begin thinking about the hazards on their jobs and the possible hazards other workers may experience

### **Key Vocabulary / Words to Review**

- |             |             |           |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| • Work      | • Unsafe    | • Lifting |
| • Job       | • Risk      | • Poison  |
| • Hazard    | • Dust      | • Danger  |
| • Hazardous | • Chemicals | • Fire    |
| • Safe      | • Noise     |           |

## Introducing Work

There are many possible ways to introduce the topic of work and working conditions. If the class has not yet covered the topic of work in general, it will be important to do that before diving into job safety and health. Here are some options for groups that have not had lessons on the workplace.

These exercises also give teachers an opportunity to learn more about the work the learners do and allow learners to share their common work experiences.

### **Option 1: Show & Tell**

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** Items workers bring from home or work

**Time:** 30 - 45 min.

**Step 1:** To prepare for this class, T has previously asked learners to bring with them something from their job that helps to show what they do – a tool, an item of clothing, a product they use, etc. Ls are asked to be prepared to speak briefly about their job.

**Step 2:** Ls make presentations to each other in small groups, using their prop. The others in the group then ask the presenter questions to learn more about the presenter's job.

**Option 2: Class Interviews**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** none

**Time:** 30 min.

**Step 1:** T writes a few questions on the board that could be used to interview someone about their work and asks Ls to think of additional questions.

**Sample questions can include:**

- What is your job?
- What do you do at your job?
- How long have you done this job?
- Where is your job?
- How do you get to work?
- What are your work hours?
- What is easy about your job?
- What is difficult about your job?
- What do you like about your job?
- What don't you like about your job?
- Is your job safe?

**Step 2:** Ls copy the questions.

**Step 3:** Ls pair up and one person uses the questions to interview the other about the partner's job.

**Step 4:** Ls switch roles so the interviewer becomes the interviewee and vice versa.

**Step 5:** Ls share something they learned about their partner with the whole class.

→ Depending on the time available, it can be useful to complete the follow-up activity outlined below after these introductory activities.

**Follow Up**

**Activity:** Vocabulary Match

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 1 – Opposites at Work*

**Time:** 30 min.

**Step 1:** T reviews the opposite vocabulary words on the handout with the class, e.g., **safe, not safe.**

**Step 2:** T demonstrates how to complete the chart using the example and asks Ls to fill in the chart themselves.

**Step 3:** Ls pair up and report their answers to each other. (If some of the Ls work in similar jobs or industries, they can be paired up.)

**Step 4:** T reviews the chart with the whole class.

## Learning about Hazards

Experience suggests that many English-language learners work in jobs with many hazards and risks. In addition to learning related vocabulary, it is critical for teachers to help students *recognize* the hazards they face every day – and start to appreciate the serious health impacts such hazards can create. Occupational health educators who use popular education methods have suggested various ways of engaging people in describing the hazards of their work, such as drawing them. The first activity below asks learners to identify the hazards a fictional worker faces on her job. Next, students are asked to draw pictures of their own worksite or job duties to help them identify hazards they face.

**Activity 1: Reading about Hazards**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 2 – Zi Li’s Story*

**Time:** 45 min. – 1 hr.

**Step 1:** T passes out copies of *Handout 2 – Zi Li’s Story* to Ls. T tells Ls to look at the picture and asks them what they think the worker’s job is.

**Step 2:** T reads the monologue while Ls listen and look at the picture. T mimes where appropriate while talking.

**Step 3:** T asks Ls what words they do not know, and writes the unfamiliar vocabulary words from the handout on the board and reviews them with the class.

**Step 4:** T introduces safety vocabulary related to the story: **hazard, danger, safe, not safe.**

**Step 5:** T reads the monologue again, miming if necessary.

**Step 6:** A class volunteer reads monologue out loud or Ls can take turns reading a sentence each.

**Step 7:** T asks Ls to talk about jobs they have had that were not safe.

**Note:** The monologue could also be taped.

**Option 1: Drawing Hazards**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** Sheets of paper, Markers or crayons

**Time:** 1 hour

**Step 1:** T introduces and defines words such as: **hazard, danger, safe, not safe.**

**Step 2:** T explains to Ls that they will be drawing pictures of their jobs and the hazards. (If there are enough learners who work in similar jobs or in the same industry, they can be grouped into small groups of 3-5. If not, Ls can work individually.) T passes out paper and markers or crayons to Ls. T can briefly model task by drawing on the front board the classroom, noting possible hazards of T's own job. T explains that students will present drawings to class.

**Step 3:** Ls draw a picture of their job and the hazards they face at work. (If Ls working in similar industries or jobs have been grouped together they can create one group picture. If not, Ls create individual drawings.)

**Step 4:** Ls explain their pictures to the whole class, pointing out the hazards.

**Step 5:** T makes a list of all of the hazards that were identified by the Ls. Ls copy the hazard list and keep it for Topic 2.

**Step 6:** Class discusses the similarities and differences in the jobs and hazards.

*Homework Option:* For homework, T could ask Ls to make a story board (series of drawings that illustrate a narrative) about a hazard on their job and write a caption under each drawing. (See *Handout 3 – Sample Story Board.*)

## Exploring beliefs and attitudes about worker safety

### Note to teachers:

Many immigrants come to the U.S. because they cannot find work or the work is very low-paying in their native country. When they come to the U.S., they take any job they can get. They are then faced with a conflict that can have terrible consequences—to risk getting hurt at an unsafe job or not to feed their families. Once placed in an unsafe job, workers often resign themselves to accept their working conditions.

The purpose of this activity is to begin exploring attitudes about worker safety which may be barriers towards taking collective action to improve working conditions. If underlying obstacles are not discussed early on, the group may be resistant to participating further in this curriculum.

The following activity is meant for workers who have some fluency in English. If the class is a beginner level group who speak the same native language, we suggest conducting this activity in the native language.

**ELL Level:** Intermediate

**Materials:** *Photos from Topic 1, Index cards, tape recorder and tapes*

**Time:** 90-120 minutes

**Advance Preparation:** Prepare the following four sets of statements on index cards. Make several sets of each, which will be used by small groups.

- 1) "I need this job. I can't get a safer job until I get my green card. If I complain, the boss will fire me or call the ICE. So I have to accept the conditions."
- 2) "I'm young. I'm just starting my life. I won't be at this job for a long time."
- 3) "Nothing is going to happen to me. I will be careful. Accidents happen to other people."
- 4) "I'm a real man. I'm strong. I can handle anything."

**Step 1:**

T breaks the class into four groups. T passes out copies of ABC Garment, Inc. Factory – Handout 4. T asks the groups to a few minutes reviewing the statements on the cards and the drawing.

T points to one person in the drawing who illustrates one of the statements and asks the groups: “What is he thinking about?” After the groups confer, write their responses on the board. The class votes on the response they think is the most likely.

T asks the class to pretend that the person is talking. T asks two volunteers to assume the role of people in the drawing. Volunteers role play a conversation, using the thought balloon as the opening for the conversation.

**Step 2:**

T explains that the class will practice role playing with more workers shown in the drawing. T asks for a volunteer from each group to come up to the front of the room. Each person draws a statement from the bag and reads it out loud to the class. T checks for comprehension.

**Step 3:**

The groups create a role play dialogue. They can write down the dialogue. T circulates among the groups and checks for grammar errors that would impede understanding. T helps groups to correct these.

**Step 4:**

The first group does the role play. The role play is tape recorded. Class discussion. This is repeated for each group. If time runs short, the remaining groups can continue in the next session.

*Grammar Practice:*

T can play back the role play after class and listen for common grammatical errors. T can choose one or two of these and create an activity or find a lesson from a grammar text that deals with the error.

**Follow Up Activity:**

**Follow up Activity:** Advanced beginner to Advanced

Hearing the experience of an injured worker who has become disabled can have a powerful impact on learners.

T can arrange for a guest speaker from an advocacy group to tell the class how and why they got injured, and why it is important to speak out about unsafe working conditions. (See Resource Section for details.)

This activity can be done in participants' native language for Beginner-level groups, if participants all speak the same native language.

**END OF TOPIC 1**

## Handout 1: Opposites at Work

### What do you think about your job?

Look at this list. Write a word from the list in each box below.

good-----bad                      nice-----mean  
long-----short                     fast-----slow  
safe-----unsafe

Example:

1. My friend	Nice
--------------	------

2. My job	
3. My work hours	
4. My wages	
5. My work speed	
6. My boss	
7. My co-workers	
8. My breaks	
9. My workplace	

## **Handout 2: Zi Li's Story: Can You Identify the Hazards?**



I am a home health aide. I take care of sick people. I come to their house when they are sick.

I give food to the sick people. I wash them, and I comb their hair. I dress them. I have to lift them. I put them in wheelchairs. I turn them in bed. Some people are heavy.

I like my job. But the work is hard. My back hurts. I have leg pain. I am tired.

## Handout 3: Sample Story Board

### *Can You Identify the Hazards?*

I'm a house painter.  
I use a sanding machine.  
There is a lot of dust.



My boss gave me a mask.



It's no good.  
I taste the dust.  
I have a cough.



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## TOPIC 2: Identifying Workplace Hazards

### Topic Objectives

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To begin recognizing and recording hazardous working conditions

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To review the vocabulary covered in Topic 1
- To understand common job hazards
- To learn nouns that describe hazards such as **dust**, **chemical** and **noise**

#### **Language Objectives/Grammar:**

- To practice using prepositions
- To practice asking and answering “Wh” questions
- To practice using intensifiers

### Topic Activities

#### **Vocabulary Review**

- Learners review terms they learned in Topic 1 such as **hazard**, **hazardous**, **safe** and **unsafe**

#### **Naming Hazards**

- Learners practice recognizing and naming hazards in workplace settings
- Learners practice documenting workplace hazards

#### **Grammar Practice**

- Learners describe the intensity and location of workplace hazards
- Learners ask and answer “Wh” questions

### Key Vocabulary / Words to Review

- Work
- Job
- Hazard
- Hazardous
- Safe
- Unsafe
- Risk
- Dust
- Chemicals
- Noise
- Lifting
- Poison
- Danger
- Fire
- Dirty
- Noisy
- Crowded
- Air pollution
- Ventilation
- Burn
- Leaking
- Odor
- Strain
- Heavy
- Too/Very
- Next to
- Between

If a significant amount of time has passed since Topic 1 was taught, a review exercise can be a good way to ease into Topic 2.

**Option 1: Hazard Mime**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginners to Intermediate

**Materials:** Items to simulate hazards such as: talcum powder and spray bottle with water (optional)

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Step 1:** T reviews concept of hazard from the first lesson.

**Step 2:** T can illustrate some types of hazards using props, such as shaking talcum powder or flour onto a surface to represent dust, squirting water from a spray bottle to represent chemical mist. T can also mime one or two hazards such as noise (hands on ears), temperature extremes (shiver or wipe brow), heavy lifting, etc.

**Step 3:** T asks Ls to name and mime other hazards on their jobs. List the hazards on the board for Ls to copy. (Common hazards that may come up include repetitive work, chemicals, heavy lifting, extreme temperatures, overwork and unsafe equipment.)

**Note:** If Ls completed the **Looking at Hazards** activity in Topic 1, T can give the Ls a copy of the hazard list they created instead of generating a new list, and then ask Ls to mime each.

## Naming Hazards

Learners revisit the drawing of the ABC Garment, Inc. Factory to continue a conversation about the hazards illustrated by the drawing. When possible, comparisons should be made to the Ls real workplaces. Workers can also begin to discuss ways they might feel comfortable beginning to document the hazards on their own jobs.

### Option 1: Hazard Search

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 4 – ABC Garment, Inc. Factory, Handout 5 – Inspection Checklist*

**Time:** 1 hr.

**Step 1:** T hands out new copies of *Handout 4 – ABC Garment, Inc. Factory*. T leads a discussion by asking several questions such as: “What is happening in the picture?”, “What’s wrong with this picture?”, and “Is this workplace safe or unsafe?”

**Step 2:** T goes around the room, asking each L to name a hazard from the picture. (Alternatively, T can turn the activity into a game by putting the class into small groups and asking them to identify as many hazards as they can in the picture. The group that identifies the most hazards wins.)

**Step 3:** T writes the hazards on the board.

**Step 4:** T passes out *Handout 5 - Inspection Checklist*. T explains the purpose of the checklist and demonstrates using it.

**Step 5:** Ls work in pairs or small groups to complete the inspection checklist for the ABC Garment, Inc. Factory, writing in as many additional hazards as they can.

**Step 6:** Each group reports back to the whole class and T leads a discussion about the hazards.

## Grammar Practice

These activities build on the **Hazard Search** above by having Ls describe the hazards in the ABC Garment, Inc. Factory using more complex grammatical constructions.

### Option 1: Intensifiers

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 4 - ABC Garment, Inc. Factory*

**Time:** 40 min.

**Step 1:** T reviews the list of hazards found in the drawing and introduces the intensifiers “too” and “very” (e.g., too hot, very dirty).

**Step 2:** Ls practice using “too” and “very”.

**Note:** T can reinforce this lesson with exercises from the Ls’ grammar text.

### Option 2: Prepositions & “Wh” Questions

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 4 – ABC Garment, Inc. Factory, Handout 5 – Inspection Checklist*

**Time:** 45 min.

**Step 1:** T makes a list of prepositions of place on the board (e.g., **on**, **next to**, **between**) and demonstrates their meanings with the class.

**Step 2:** T asks questions about the hazards that have been recorded on the *Inspection Checklist* by the class. (e.g., “Where is the water leak?”, “Where is the locked fire exit?”, “Where is the bottle of chemicals?”)

**Step 3:** Ls respond with the correct prepositions (e.g., “It is **on** the ceiling”, “It is **between** the boxes and the fabric”, “It is **next to** the food”.

**Step 4:** Ls pair up and practice asking and answering the questions.

**Notes to Teacher:**

Some employers may become agitated when workers openly try to document problems on the job. If Ls want to use this checklist at their workplaces, suggest that they first talk with someone at NYCOSH or at your community organization about this action. Documenting problems is important, but ensuring that the worker is protected from retaliation is also important. No L should attempt to take on workplace problems alone. It's very risky.

**Follow-Up Activity**

Ls can use the inspection checklist to assess their own workplaces. This can be done in class. Ls can try to fill out the chart by themselves, using their memories. Or, they can work in pairs interviewing each other. (Each person in their pair asks the questions of their partner. The partner reads along and checks items as applicable to their own workplace.)

T can generate a whole class discussion with oral questions such as:

- 1) How many problems did you check off on your list?
- 2) Have other workers at your workplace noticed these problems?
- 3) Would you talk with your boss about these problems? Why or why not?

**END OF TOPIC 2**

## Handout 4: ABC Garment, Inc. Factory

Can you identify the hazards?



Source: *Your Rights at Work, an ESL Workbook*, (1997, UNITE)

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## **Handout 5: Inspection Checklist**

You and your co-workers may be able to identify many types of health and safety hazards. Here's how to check for problems.

Use your eyes!



Look at your work area.

Use your ears!



Listen for sounds.

Use your nose!



Smell the work area.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Work Area/Department \_\_\_\_\_

Answer each question below – mark “yes” or “no” for each.

Use the other side of the paper to:

- ✓ Add problems that are not on the list
- ✓ Explain problems

**Work Area**

Is it noisy?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Is it dusty?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Are there strong smells?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Is it dirty?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Are there pests, such as mice or bugs?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Is it overcrowded?	_____ Yes	_____ No

**Air**

Is it too hot?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Is it too cold?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Is the air stuffy?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Are the fans or air conditioning broken?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Do you work with chemicals?	_____ Yes	_____ No

**Equipment and Tools**

Do you need better equipment?                     Yes                     No

Do you need better tools?                         Yes                     No

**Machines**

Are the machines broken?                         Yes                     No

Can you reach the blades of the machines?    Yes                     No

**Body Strain**

Do you lift or carry heavy things?              Yes                     No

Do you bend and reach?                          Yes                     No

Do you make the same motion all day?          Yes                     No

Do you stand a lot?                                 Yes                     No

**Work load**

Do you have to work very fast?                 Yes                     No

Do you have too much work?                    Yes                     No

Do you work more than 8 hours each day?    Yes                     No

Please explain each hazard that you checked in your list.

**Hazard #1:**

What is it?

---

Where is it?

---

**Hazard #2:**

What is it?

---

Where is it?

---

**Hazard #3:**

What is it?

---

Where is it?

---

**Hazard #4:**

What is it?

---

Where is it?

---

**Hazard #5:**

What is it?

---

Where is it?

---

**Hazard #6:**

What is it?

---

Where is it?

---

## Topic 3: How Do Toxic Substances Enter the Body?

### Topic Objectives

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communications Objectives:**

- To identify the major routes of entry of toxic substances into the body
- To read product labels
- To understand how toxic exposures can cause occupational disease

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To introduce vocabulary on toxic substances: chemicals, dusts
- To introduce vocabulary on internal organs: lungs, stomach, intestines
- To introduce vocabulary related to exposure: breathe, eat, swallow, skin contact

### Key Vocabulary / Words to Review

- |                |               |                                       |
|----------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Breathing    | • Chemical    | • Personal protective equipment (PPE) |
| • Swallow      | • Vapor / Gas |                                       |
| • Skin contact | • Dust        |                                       |
| • Particles    | • Toxic       |                                       |
| • Exposure     | • Ventilation |                                       |

### Background Note:

There are several ways that toxic chemicals can enter the body by:

- ✓ breathing in dusts (such as powdery chemicals, mineral dust)
- ✓ breathing in vapors/mists (from chemical sprays)
- ✓ ingesting particles (eating or smoking in a contaminated area where toxic particles can settle)
- ✓ absorbing toxic liquid through unprotected skin (such as cleaners on the hands)

The objective of this lesson is to demonstrate to workers how they can become ill if they are not protected against contaminants in the work environment.

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### Option 1: Exposures to Chemicals

**ELL Level:** Mid-level beginner to intermediate

**Materials:** Illustration of a hair and nail salon (*Handout 6*)  
Can of hair spray, bottle of nail polish, bottle of polish remover  
Illustration of entry routes (*Handout 7*)

**Time:** 90-120 minutes

**Step 1:** T places people in small groups.  
T asks Ls if there are any hazards in the illustration.  
Small groups report back. As people respond, T writes down answers on the board. Ls label their copy of the illustration.

Answers should include: hair spray, hair dye (being mixed).  
nail polish, polish remover, cigarette smoke

**Step 2:** T asks Ls if any of the workers could get sick from working there.  
T asks Ls how they could get sick. (T can give hints by coughing, sneezing, looking dizzy)

For emphasis, T can spray some hair spray into the room, then open the bottle of nail polish and remover for a few minutes while this activity is going on.

**Step 3:** T then passes out drawings of entry routes.  
T asks class to think about how each hazard on the list could make the workers sick.  
T models, "How can hair spray make you sick?"  
T points to the illustration showing breathing in chemicals.

Groups then try to match each hazard with one of the drawings of entry routes and report back.

**Exposure to Chemicals  
(continued)**

**hazard**

Hair spray  
Hair dye (being mixed & open on floor)  
Nail polish  
Nail polish remover  
Nail filing  
Cigarette  
Sandwich (contaminated by spray)  
Coffee (contaminated by spray)

**route of entry**

Breathe it  
Breathe it, touches skin, goes through skin  
Breathe it, touches skin, goes through skin  
Breathe it, goes through skin  
Breathe it  
Breathe it  
Eat it  
Drink it

**Step 4:** T asks small groups to solve the problems in the hair salon.  
T makes a list in the report back

Possible solutions include:

**1. Use ventilation.**

- Open the window to increase the amount of fresh air in the room.
- Mix chemicals in a separate area that has exhaust fan.
- Get a vent for the manicure table, so that the fumes go outside.

**2. Use personal protective equipment.**

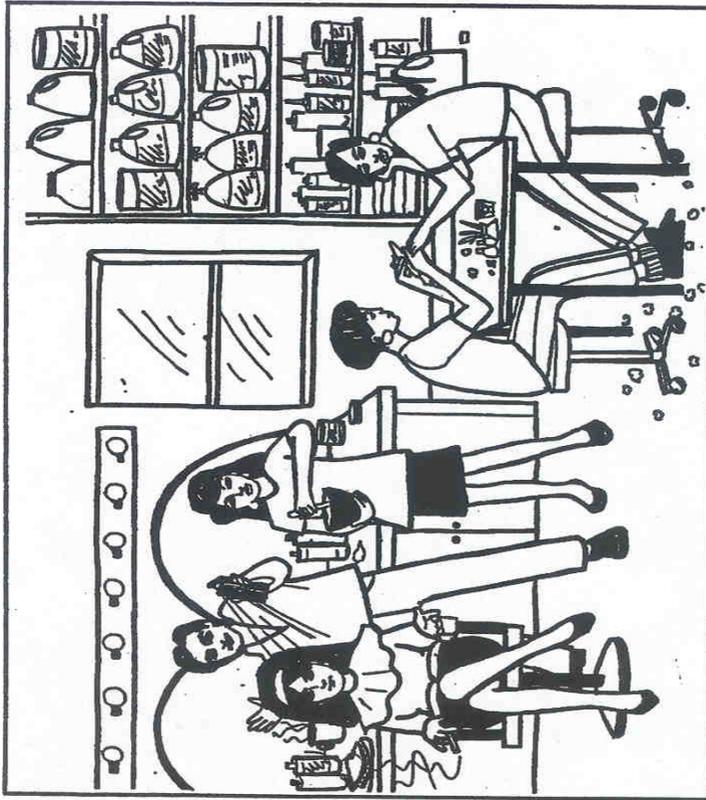
Wear gloves and goggles when you mix chemicals.

**3. Prevent other hazards.**

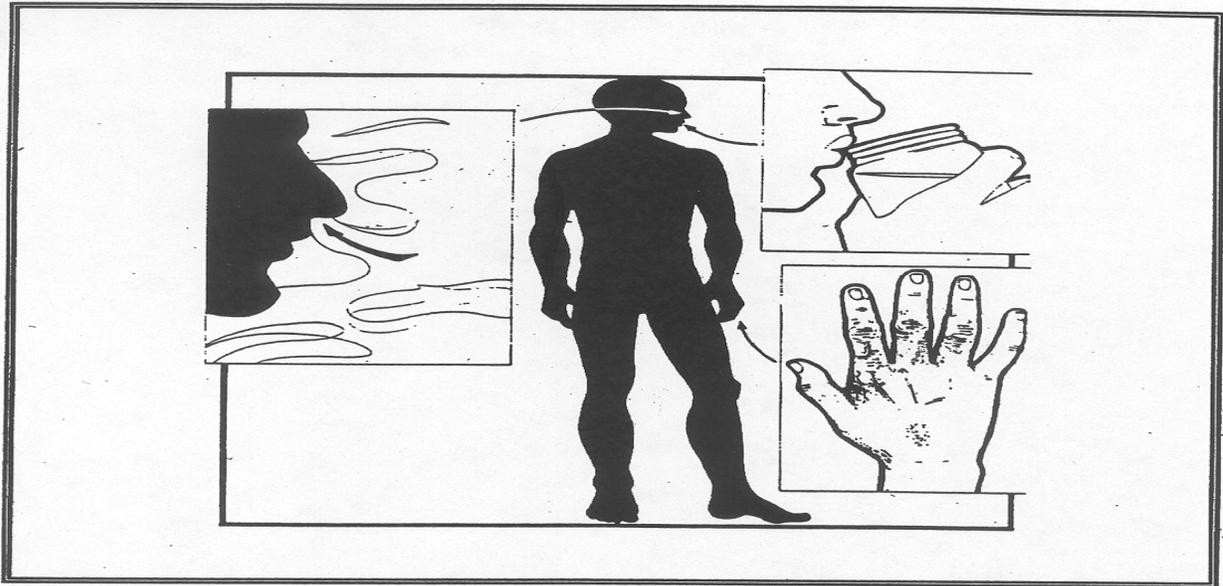
- No food or drink in the work area.
- Keep all containers closed when not using them.
- Enforce a no-smoking policy.
- Put waste in garbage can with a lid.

## END OF TOPIC 3

## Handout 6: Can You Identify the Hazards?



## Handout 7: How Hazards Enter the Body



## **Topic 4 : The Health Effects of Hazards**

### **Topic Objectives**

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To explore how hazards can lead to symptoms and health problems
- To explore ways workers can take action to address workplace safety and health problems and the potential consequences of those actions

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To introduce vocabulary and expressions about pain: **be in pain, have pain, feel pain, get hurt, get injured, be hurt, hurts**
- To introduce the concept of symptom
- To introduce the concept of consequence

#### **Language Objectives/Grammar:**

- To practice using degree adverbials and qualifiers
- To practice using modals

### **Topic Activities**

#### **Introducing Workplace Injuries & Illnesses**

- Learners share their knowledge of workplace injuries and illnesses

#### **Linking Injuries to Hazards**

- Learners examine the relationship between hazards and symptoms
- Learners identify ways to prevent worker injury and illness
- Learners identify ways workers can address safety and health problems

#### **Grammar Practice**

- Learners make sentences using **too, very** and **a lot**
- Learners make sentences using **can, must** and **have to**

**Key Vocabulary / Words to Review**

- Symptom
- Consequence
- Impact
- Injury
- Illness
- Disease
- Injury
- Repetitive strain injuries

**Note to Teachers:**

Among the most common types of occupational injuries and illnesses are repetitive strain injuries (RSIs) that affect the back, hand, arm, shoulder, and/or neck. These injuries occur over time and are caused by a combination of risk factors including: repetitive motion, awkward postures, fixed postures, lack of rest, force and stress. Hundreds of thousands of RSIs occur each year. They can be quite debilitating, and include a host of chronic disorders of the musculoskeletal system such as bursitis, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome and chronic back pain.

This topic introduces the problem of RSIs via an open-ended Freirean style conversation, in the form of a code. Codes are conversation triggers. They describe typical social problems that the group has experienced. They are constructed to reflect the group's emotional feelings, attitudes, and concerns about the problem. An illustration often accompanies the code, placing it in context.

The conversation trigger in *Handout 8* is designed for workers in many industries who are at risk for RSIs (e.g., supermarket cashiers, computer users, garment workers, assembly line workers construction workers, cleaners and nannies.)

## Introducing Workplace Injuries & Illnesses

**Option 1:      Sharing Experiences**

**ELL Level:**      Advanced Beginner to Advanced

**Materials:**      none

**Time:**            30 min.

**Step 1:**            T asks Ls to stand up if they are answering yes to the following questions. (This exercise can also be done by forming a circle and asking students answering yes to step in to the center of the circle.)

- 1) I have had to do work that I thought was unsafe at least once in a job.
- 2) I have seen others do work that I thought was unsafe.
- 3) I have been hurt on the job.
- 4) I have seen someone else get hurt on the job.
- 5) I have been hurt on the job so badly I had to go to the doctor.
- 6) I know someone who has been hurt so badly on the job they had to go to the doctor.

**Step 2:**            T asks Ls to share stories of injury on the job, either their own or stories they have heard. Ls discuss the similarities and differences in the stories.

## Linking Injuries & Illnesses to Hazards

**Option 1: Health Effects Role Play**

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginners to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 8 - Work Hurts*

**Time:** 45-60 min.

**Step 1:** T passes out *Handout 8 – Work Hurts*. Ls read the skit silently and underline any unfamiliar vocabulary or expressions. T can put these on the board and ask volunteers to explain them, filling in gaps or correcting mistakes.

**Step 2:** Volunteers read and act out the situation in front of the class. (Alternatively, T could select some of the stronger readers to do the role play first, and then the class reviews vocabulary afterwards.)

**Step 3:** Repeat the role play with other Ls.

**Step 4:** T asks questions of the whole class (or small groups discuss) such as:

- “What is the problem that the workers are talking about?”
- “What are the symptoms the workers are experiencing?”
- “What hazards caused the problem?”
- “What do the people in the conversation think about this problem?”
- “Do you know anyone who has a problem like this here in the U.S. or in your native country?”
- “Why do you think this problem has happened?”

**Follow-Up**

**Activity:**           **Actions and  
Consequences**

**ELL Level:**        Intermediate

**Materials:**       *Handout 8 – Work Hurts, Handout 9 – Taking Action for Safety and Health*

**Time:**             60-90 min.

**Step 1:**            After the class has completed the Health Effects Role Play above, T divides the class into small groups and passes out *Handout 9 – Taking Action for Safety and Health*. T demonstrates how to complete the form and explains what a consequence is. T models one solution one consequence.

**Step 2:**            Groups are asked to brainstorm and list some possible next steps the workers can take and the potential consequences of those actions. If this is too difficult for small groups, T can do this as a whole class activity.

**Step 3:**            Small Groups report back to the whole group. If this is too difficult for small groups, T can do it as a whole class activity.

## Grammar Practice

The activities above can be followed by activities that allow learners to practice using grammatical constructions commonly found in conversation.

Possibilities include:

- Degree Adverbials & Qualifiers: a lot, too much, too many, so much, very
- Modals: can, must, have to

**Option 1: Degree Adverbials**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** none

**Time:** 30 min.

**Step 1:** T orally models a few sentences showing differences between “a lot,” “too much,” “very much” and then writes them on the board.

**Step 2:** Ls practice in pairs using exercises from a grammar textbook.

**Step 3:** For homework (or for an additional reinforcement activity) Ls could be asked to try to write sentences using each of these constructions.

**Step 4:** In the next class, volunteers could come up to the blackboard to write their sentences. T corrects the examples.

## END OF TOPIC 4

## Handout 8: Work Hurts



**Mei:** My hand hurts today. How is your hand today, Carmen?  
Does it hurt?

**Carmen:** Yes. It hurts a lot. It hurts every day. We have to work too fast. Does your hand hurt, Uzma?

**Uzma:** I don't complain. I need this job.

**Carmen:** Yes, we have to work. But the pain is bad. I can't move my hand very much after work. My children have to cook. I have to take pain pills. I have to have an operation.

**Mei:** Oh, no! I'm sorry.

**Carmen:** We are not alone. Many workers here have pain. Natalya is going to have an operation next week.

**Uzma:** What can we do? We must work to help our families. Pain is part of the job.

**Mei:** I don't know. It's not right. We have too much stress. We have too much work.

**Uzma:** Be quiet! The boss is over there.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What are the workers' problems?
2. Why do they have these problems?

## **Handout 9: Taking Action for Safety and Health**

### **What can the workers in the story do about their problem?**

1. List a solution to the workers' problems in column 1.
2. Is it a good solution? Why or why not? What can happen if the workers do this? Put your answer in column 2.
3. Repeat for each solution you can think of!

COLUMN 1

COLUMN 2

Solution: What can the workers do about the problem?

Is it a good solution? Why or why not?



## Topic 5: Documenting Health Effects of Hazards

### Topic Objectives

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To introduce and practice words related to parts of the body
- To identify common work-related injuries among learners

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To familiarize Ls with vocabulary & expressions about symptoms: **numb, sore, tingling, swollen, ache**, etc.

#### **Language Objectives/Grammar:**

- To practice using Yes/No questions
- To practice asking and answering “Wh” questions

### Topic Activities

#### **Body Mapping**

- Learners practice documenting the impact of workplace hazards on their health
- Learners begin observing patterns of injuries and illness among types of workers

#### **Vocabulary Review**

- Learners review names of body parts

#### **Key Vocabulary / Words to Review**

- Numb
- Sore
- Tingling
- Swollen
- Ache

## **Body Mapping**

In this topic a technique used by public health educators known as “body mapping” is shown. Ls practice documenting how the hazards they experience on the job may be affecting their health. The purpose of this activity is to show graphically and at a glance the effects of hazardous exposures or job stresses on a whole group of workers.

### **Note to Teachers:**

This activity involves volunteers placing stickers on a classmate. Some Ls may not feel comfortable either being touched or touching someone else. If no one wants to be the volunteer, then you, as the teacher (and only if you feel comfortable), can wear the stickers. If you think people are uncomfortable, then have the volunteer place the stickers on him/herself as people call out body parts.

**Option 1: Live Body Maps**

**ELL Level:** Any level of  
Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** Day-Glow colored stickers

**Time:** 60 min.

**Step 1:** T asks a volunteer, "Where do you have pain or stress?" The volunteer points to a place or places on her own body and names those parts of the body.

**Step 2:** Then the volunteer places one or more dot stickers (provided by T) on T's body in the places where the volunteer feels pain. T then asks another volunteer with an ache, pain, or stress to place more stickers on T's body. Repeat with a third volunteer. The idea is to show patterns of health effects for the group, using one person as the "map."

**If the group is a mix of different industries, T can do the following:**

- T asks three volunteers to come to the front of the room. T points to the neck, shoulder, arms and hands on the first volunteer and asks class to name the body parts. Ls call out answers. T points to the back of the second volunteer and asks class to name the body part. Ls call out answers. T points to the legs and feet of the third volunteer and asks class to name the body parts.

**Step 3:** The class should discuss:

- What they notice about where the stickers are placed (i.e., patterns of symptoms).
- Why they think people are experiencing pain in these places.

*Observations of patterns of symptoms might include:*

- Domestic workers and construction workers have back pain.
- Factory workers doing assembly and grocery checkout clerks have hand, arm, shoulder problems.

**Step 4:**

T draws up on the board a chart with three columns labeled: NECK, SHOULDER, ARM & HAND PAIN; BACK PAIN; LEGS, FEET PAIN.

Then T asks each person in the class, one at a time, to come up to the volunteers and place their stickers on the body parts of the volunteer corresponding to places on their own bodies where they may feel pain.

- Then each person writes their job title in the appropriate column(s).
- It is likely that more than one worker will experience pain in the same general areas of the body. Ls should continue to place stickers, even if they are in the same area of the body that someone else has already identified and placed on the volunteer.
- If more than one person has the same job title and experiences pain in the same place, then T can help them make a tally with strokes (as in the example below).

NECK, SHOULDER, ARM, HAND PAIN	BACK PAIN	LEGS, FEET PAIN
Construction worker	Construction worker	Security guard
Sewer in garment factory	Landscaper	Delivery person

Then T and class look at the chart and talk about common injuries among the industries

**If the class is composed of workers who do similar work,**

- T can keep asking other members of the class to come up and place stickers in the appropriate place, naming the body parts. It is likely that more than one worker will experience pain in the same general areas of the body. Ls should continue to place stickers, even if they are in the same area of the body that someone else has already identified and placed on the volunteer.

**Option 2: Drawing Body Maps**

**ELL Level:** Any level of Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** Large pieces of butcher paper – 2 sheets each for each student, Colored Dot Stickers or markers

**Time:** 60 min.

**Step 1:** T reviews the parts of the body by pointing to parts on T's body and asking Ls to name them.

**Step 2:** T then asks where they have pain or stress or other health problems that they think are caused by their work. A couple of volunteers name the body parts where they experience symptoms, pointing them out on the diagram.

**Step 3:** T breaks the class into groups. (If there are enough learners who work in similar jobs or in the same industry, they can be grouped together.) Each group receives butcher paper. T tell Ls to outline a human figure, front on one sheet and back on a second sheet. Ls take turns naming where on their body they feel symptoms and placing colored dot stickers on the corresponding body parts on the diagram. It is likely that more than one worker will experience pain in the same general body area. Ls should continue to place stickers, even if they are in the same area of the body that someone else has already identified and placed on the diagram. The idea is to show patterns of health effects for the group.

**Step 4:** When Ls have finished, the class should then discuss:

- What they notice about where the stickers are placed (i.e., patterns of symptoms).
- Why they think people are experiencing pain in these places.

Observations of patterns might include:

- Domestic workers, construction workers and home health aides have back pain
- Factory workers doing assembly and grocery checkout clerks have hand, arm, shoulder problems.

## Homework: Ache and Pain Interview

Ls can interview family members to find out whether they are experiencing any pain in relation to their work. (Less advanced Ls can ask the questions in their native language.)

This activity might be especially useful for Ls in the class who are not working, to help engage them in the curriculum. To prepare, T can help the class generate questions to ask in the interview.

## Vocabulary Review

To practice the vocabulary on body parts the class can do an adaptation of “Ouch! That Hurts,” from *Jazz Chants*. Teachers can consult any *Jazz Chants* book for more directions.

### Option 1: Jazz Chants

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginners to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 10 – Ouch! That Hurts*

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Step 1:** T demonstrates by rhythmically reading the chant aloud while clapping.

**Step 2:** Ls read the chant in unison while clapping.

**Step 3:** T divides the class into two groups and asks them to recite the chant again, alternating stanzas between the groups.

**Step 4:** Ls should be encouraged to contribute a line spontaneously to the chant. The class, acting as a chorus, repeats a refrain.

## END OF TOPIC 5

## Handout 10: Ouch! That Hurts

Ouch!

What's the matter?

I can't turn my head.

Oh, that hurts, that hurts.  
I know that hurts.

Ouch!

What's the matter?

I can't move my thumb

Oh, that hurts, that hurts.  
I know that hurts.

Ouch!

What's the matter?

I ...

Oh, that hurts, that hurts.  
I know that hurts.

Adapted from *Jazz Chants* by Carolyn Graham (Oxford University Press, 1978, p.35)

## **Topic 6: Who Is Responsible for Workplace Safety & Health?**

### **Topic Objectives**

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To explore attitudes and beliefs about injury causation

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To introduce words such as **fault**, **responsibility**, **mistake** and **careless**

### **Topic Activities**

#### **Employer Responsibility for Safety**

- Learners discuss their views about how injuries occur
- Learners become aware that employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace

### **Key Vocabulary / Words to Review**

- Responsibility
- Negligence
- Mistake
- Fault
- Careless

### **Note to Teachers:**

If you were to ask a group of people, "Why do accidents happen in the workplace," many would say that accidents are the result of worker carelessness. Yet, there are many reasons why accidents can occur, including negligence on the part of the employer. In any case, employers bear the legal responsibility for preventing accidents. Under the OSHA law, they are required to keep the workplace free from hazards. The purpose of this topic is to explore worker and employer roles in accident and illness prevention.

## Employer Responsibility for Safety

The point of these activities is for Ls to see that there is a constellation of factors that cause injury and illness in the workplace and that employers, not workers alone, bear responsibility for safe working conditions.

**Option 1: Who's at Fault?**

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** Handouts 11-A and 11-B – Workplace Accidents, Handout 4 – ABC Garment, Inc. Factory

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Step 1:** T shows illustrations of work-related accidents. In these illustrations the accidents appear to be the fault of the workers.

**Step 2:** T reviews the following questions written on the board:

- What's wrong with this picture?
- Why did the accident happen?
- Whose fault is the accident?

**Step 3:** T divides the class into small groups and passes out copies of *Handout 11 A and B - Workplace Accidents* to each group. (If time is limited, T can pass out only one illustration to each group.)

**Step 4:** In small groups, Ls discuss the questions on the board for each illustration.

**Step 5:** In small groups, Ls review the hazards in *Handout 4 – ABC Garment, Inc. Factory* shown in Topic 2, asking: "Who is responsible for the hazards in this picture"?

**Step 6:** T summarizes, explaining the contrast between the illustrations. (*Handout 11-A and 11-B – Workplace Accidents* seem to blame the workers, while *Handout 4 – ABC Garment, Inc. Factory* shows the employer has a responsibility to keep the workplace safe.) T tells the class that the law says the boss is responsible for making sure the workplace is safe.

**Option 2:** Yes, No or  
Maybe Game

**ELL Level:** Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 12 – Yes, No and Maybe Signs*

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Step 1:** T puts the *Handout 12 – Yes, No and Maybe Signs* on different walls in the room.

**Step 2:** T explains to the class that a statement will be read and Ls will be asked to stand by the sign that represents their views, either Yes, No or Maybe.  
Note: If there is not enough space in the room for people to line up, then a volunteer in each corner of the room can hold up one of the signs. Ls can move to sit near each other.

**Step 3:** T then reads one of the following statements out loud and writes it on the board. Ls stand under the sign which corresponds to their view about the statement.

**Step 4:** T asks for volunteers to say why they answered Yes, No or Maybe. Or the group can confer and make a statement, rather than individuals having to defend their positions. Class discussion follows.

**Step 5:** Steps 2-4 can be repeated, using another statement from the list below.

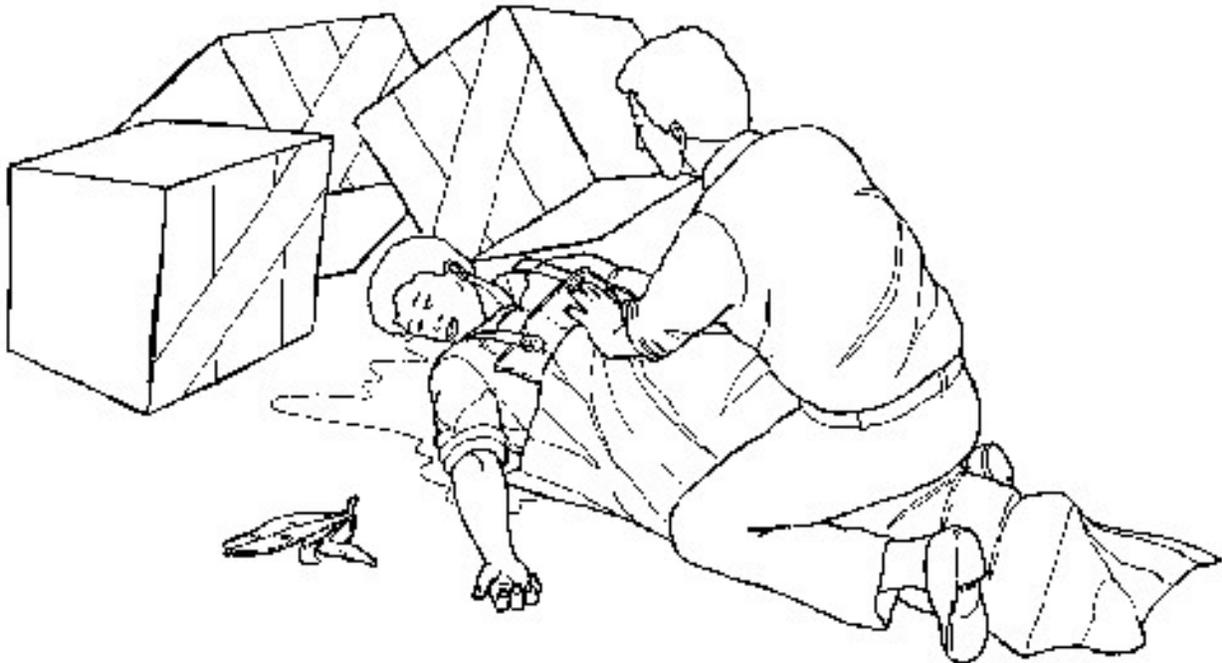
**Statements:**

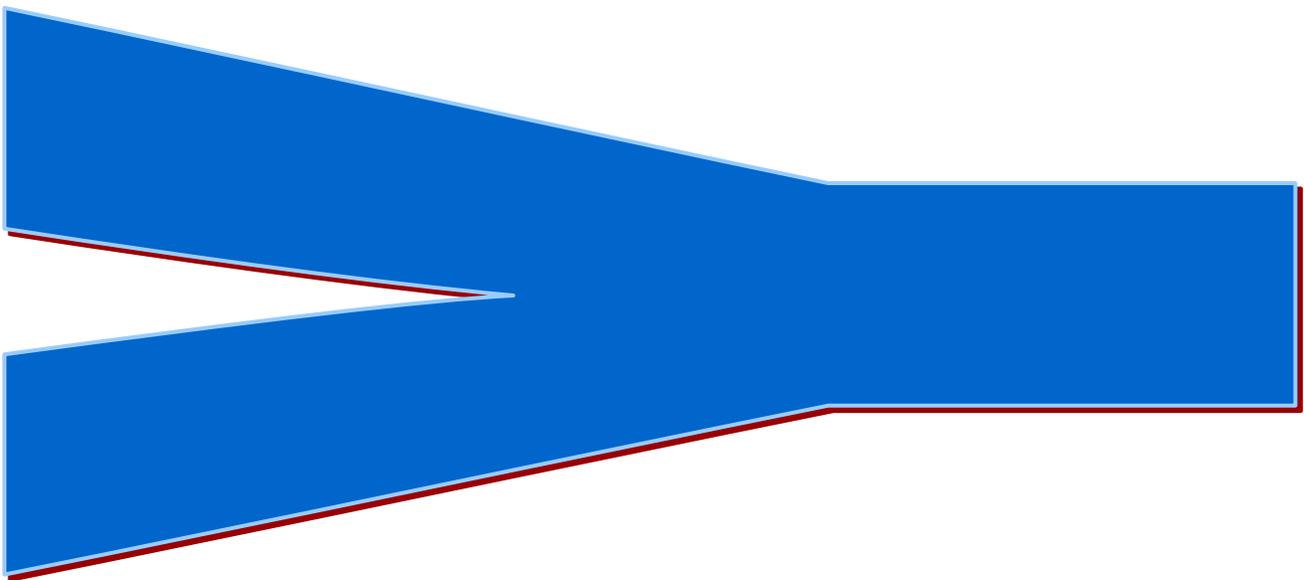
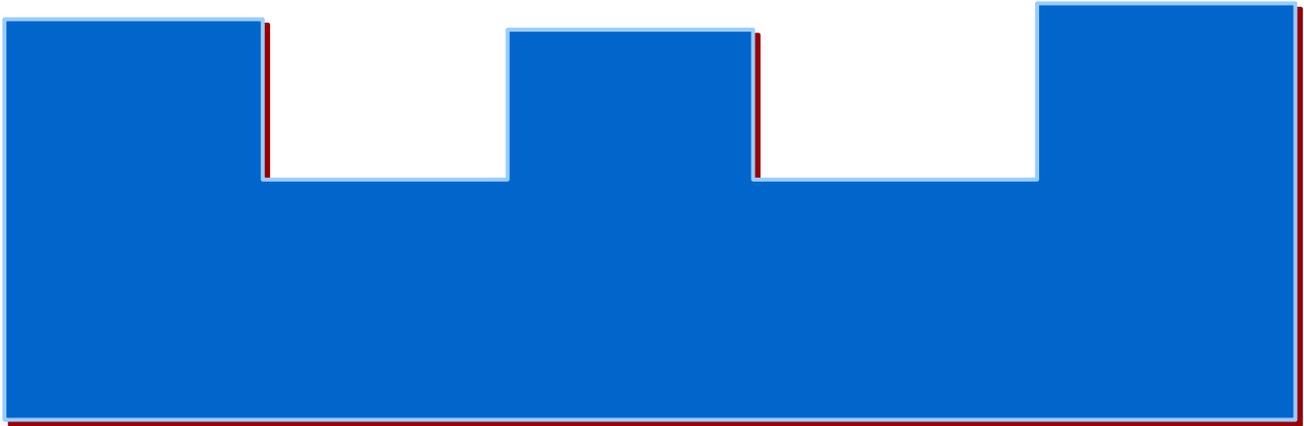
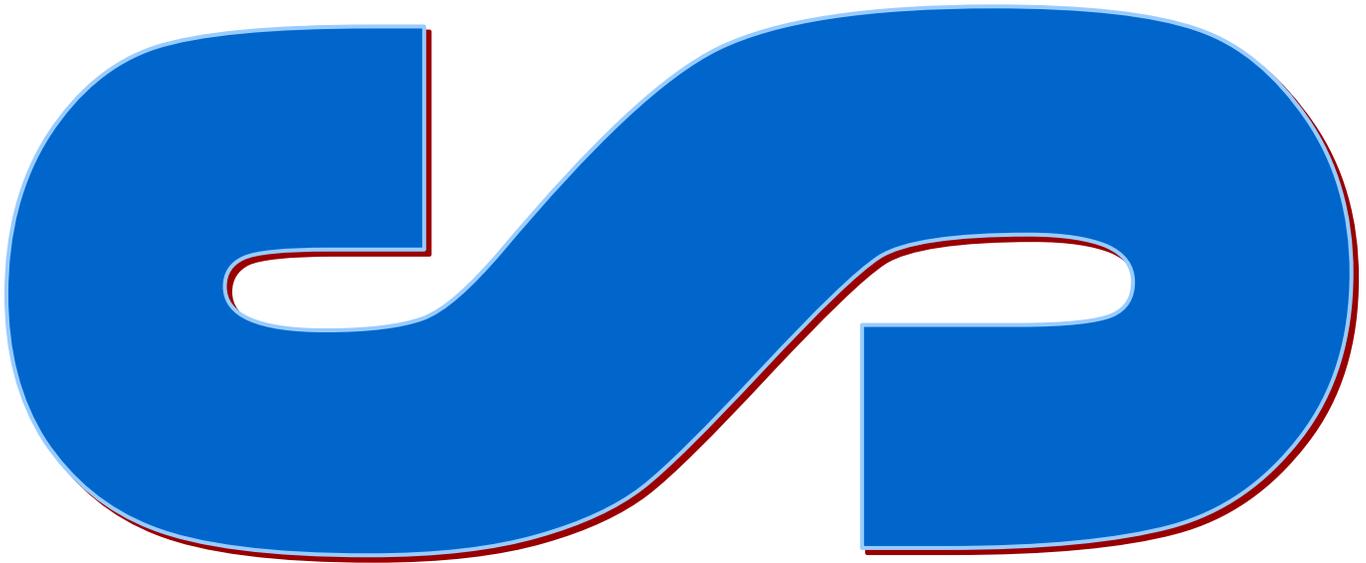
- **Be glad that you have a job. Accept the conditions.**  
*Point to make:* If working conditions are very unsafe, workers are likely to get hurt or even killed. An injured worker can not feed himself or his family. Workplaces become safer when workers speak up.
- **There are health and safety problems at every job.**  
*Point to make:* Most problems can be prevented.
- **Workers get hurt because they are not careful.**  
*Point to make:* The boss is supposed to make the job safe.
- **Immigrant workers get hurt because they don't speak English.**  
*Point to make:* There are many reasons why immigrant workers get hurt. They may not know their rights. They may not be trained and may not get safety equipment.

## Workplace Accidents: Identify the Hazards & Injuries



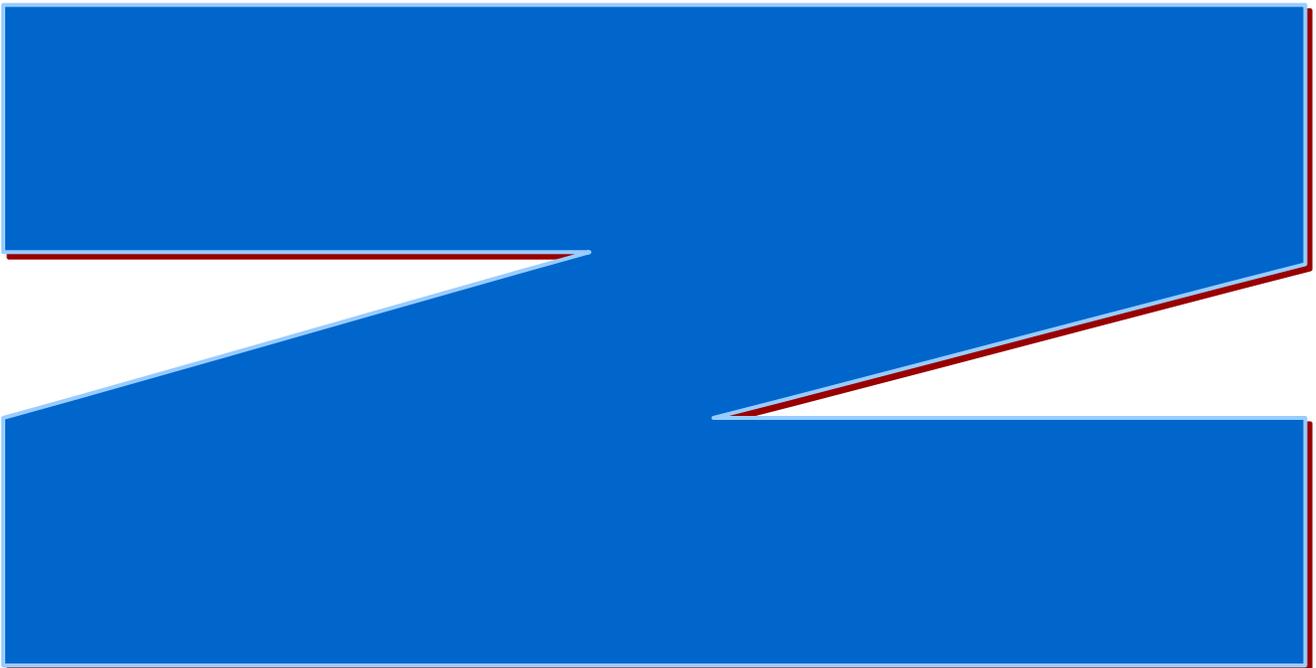
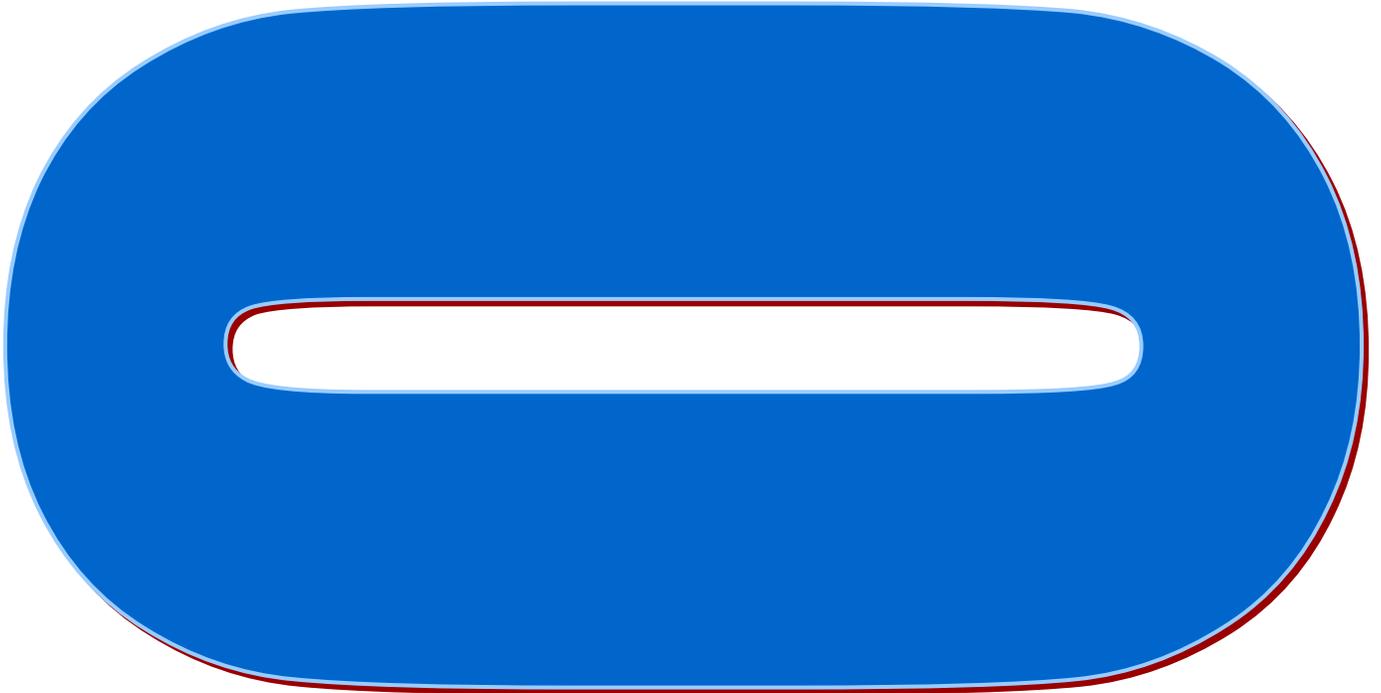
## **Workplace Accidents: Identify the Hazards and Injuries**



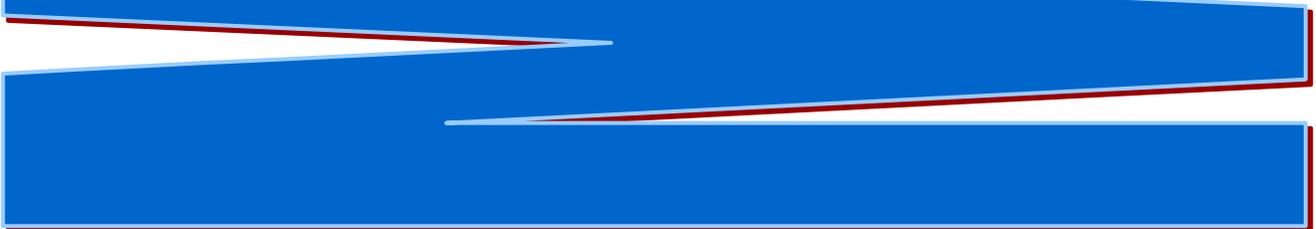
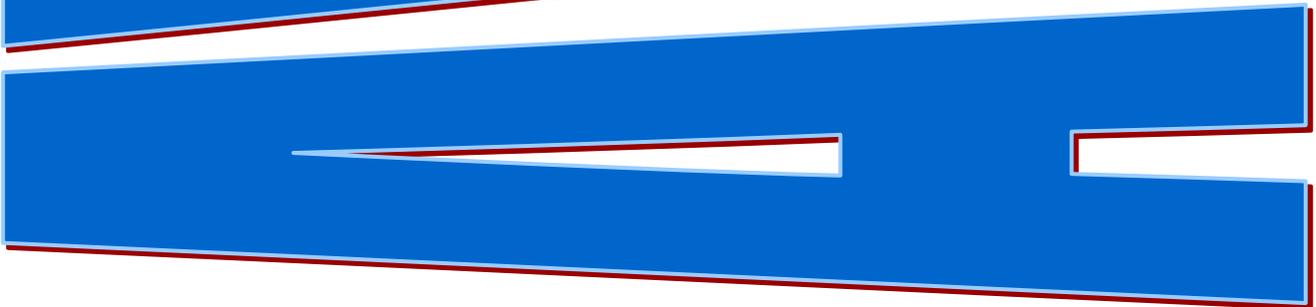
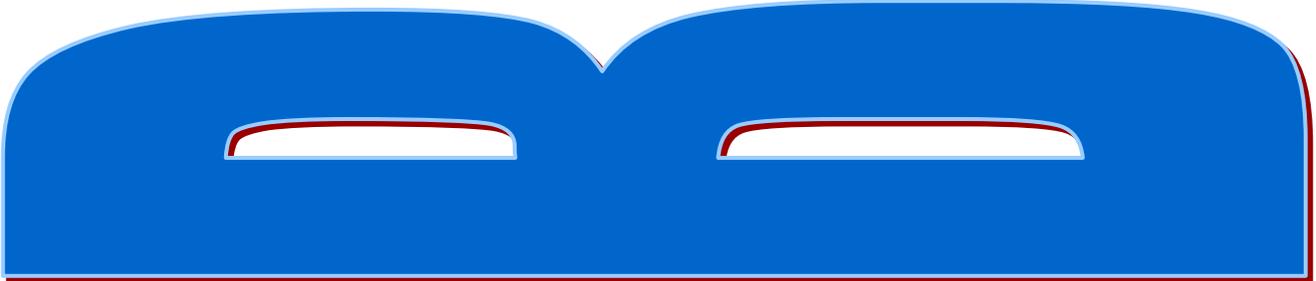


Handout 12 – A

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## Topic 7: Know Your Rights – Workers’ Compensation

### Topic Objectives

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To make Ls aware that they have a legal right to workers’ compensation if they are injured on the job
- To provide basic information about the workers’ compensation system
- To give Ls practice filling out authentic forms

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To familiarize Ls with terms such as compensation, insurance, medical bills, forms, lawyer, fill out and emergency room
- To review vocabulary on body parts introduced in earlier Topics

#### **Language Objectives/Grammar:**

- To practice regular and irregular past tense verbs

### Topic Activities

#### **What is Workers’ Compensation?**

- Learners explore what happens to a worker when he or she is hurt on the job
- Learners are introduced to the workers’ compensation system

#### **Grammar Practice**

- Learners practice identifying past tense verbs and creating past tense sentences
- Learners practice creating Yes/No questions

### Key Vocabulary / Words to Review

- Workers compensation
- Fault
- Insurance

Note to Teachers:

Injured workers typically do not have the right to sue their employer if they become injured. Instead, they can apply for workers' compensation. Workers' compensation is a no-fault system of insurance. It is supposed to provide medical care for the work-related injury or illness, partial payment of lost wages if the worker loses at least eight days of work, some other cash benefits, and job rehabilitation. Every state has a workers' compensation bureau, which is part of the state Department of Labor. In New York, the New York State Workers' Compensation Board is this agency.

Every employer is required to purchase workers' compensation insurance for all of their employees. Most workers are covered from their first day on the job. One exception is domestic workers, who are only covered if they work for the same employer for at least 40 hours/week.

Workers are covered by workers' compensation regardless of their immigration status. The Workers' Compensation Board has stated that everyone, including undocumented immigrants, is entitled to workers' compensation if injured on job. All workers, however should be advised not to answer questions about their immigration status, because this can put them at greater risk.

Although it is designed to be a no-fault insurance system, the process of applying for and receiving compensation is often quite adversarial between injured employees and their employers. It is also a lengthy, legalistic process. Workers must fill out a form to apply; a treating physician must also fill out a workers' compensation form; the employer also sends in a form. A series of hearings in court often follows, and cases are decided by judges. Emergency room doctors should, but may not, be familiar with the worker's compensation form for injuries. The New York State the Health Department has funded a network of occupational health clinics which diagnose and treat work-related injuries and illnesses. Doctors working at those clinics are experienced in dealing with the workers' compensation system. See Resource Section for details. In theory, injured workers can apply for compensation on their own, but it is the equivalent of applying for a green card--it is extremely difficult without the help of a lawyer. Workers do not have to pay for compensation lawyers. The lawyers receive a percentage of the settlement, which is determined by the judge.

For more information about workers' compensation, contact NYCOSH at (212) 627-3900 or go to the NYCOSH website at [www.NYCOSH.org](http://www.NYCOSH.org) or see the Resource Section at the end of this manual.

## What is Workers' Compensation?

### Option 1: Francisco's Accident

**ELL Level:** Mid-Level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 13 A-J – Francisco's Story Boards, Handout 14 – Francisco's Accident*

**Time:** 60 minutes

- Step 1:** T shows the class story boards of "Francisco's Accident" (*Handout 13 A-J – Francisco's Accident Story Boards*) and asks Ls to look at pictures just to the point where Francisco is put in an ambulance. T asks Ls what they think is happening in the story. Class discussion. Then T asks Ls to predict how the story will end. More class discussion.
- Step 2:** T reads the whole story (*Handout 13 – Francisco's Accident*) aloud slowly, saying the number of each picture before reading the corresponding text. Ls listen to the story and follow along. At the end, T asks Ls if their prediction about the ending was accurate.
- Step 3:** T passes out copies of *Handout 14 – Francisco's Accident*. T puts unfamiliar vocabulary on the board and explains it: e.g., compensation, insurance, medical bills, forms, attorney, lawyer, fill out. T reads the story again. The class follows along silently. Ls call out additional vocabulary words that they don't understand as they follow along. T puts these on the board and explains them.
- Step 4:** To check comprehension, T could:
- recite lines from the story containing the vocabulary words on the board and ask Ls to say the numbers of the corresponding pictures.
  - point to various details in the pictures, asking about them, e.g., asking them to name body parts or objects.
  - ask Ls to retell the story in their own words.
- Step 5:** T asks the class if they or anyone they know has been hurt on the job, and if so, what happened. The T breaks the class into small groups to discuss the story and reactions to any experiences which may have been shared by the Ls.
- Step 6:** After the small groups report back, higher level Ls should try to discuss why the accident happened and whose fault it was, as a review of Topic 5. For less fluent Ls, T can ask Y/N questions of the class about the cause of the accident.

**Follow-Up**

**Activity 1: Content Review**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 13 A-J – Francisco’s Accident Story Boards, Handout 14 – Francisco’s Accident*

**Time:** 20 - 30 minutes

**Step 1:** Step 4 (above) can be followed up with a series of written True and False questions about the story, which T can create and Ls can work on in pairs.

**Step 2:** T can also prepare a one paragraph summary of the story, with key vocabulary words missing. Ls work individually or in pairs to complete the story.

Depending on the level of the class and the amount of time, T may choose to break the following exercises into two or more lessons.

**Follow-Up Activity: Advanced Beginner to Advanced**

Hearing the experience of an injured worker who has become disabled can have a powerful impact on learners.

T can arrange for a guest speaker from an advocacy group tell the class how and why they got injured, and why it is important to speak out about unsafe working conditions. (See Resource Section for details.)

Then the class can generate Y/N and WH questions for the speaker.

T can help the class correct the grammar mistakes in the questions afterwards.

## Grammar Practice

**Option 1:** Past Tense

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 13 A to J – Francisco’s Accident Story Boards, Handout 14 – Francisco’s Accident*

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Step 1:** Practice using the past tense. T can ask Ls to underline all verbs in the past tense in the story, saying something like, “There are more than 25 verbs in the past tense in this story. Can you find them?”

**Step 2:** T can give additional practice via exercises on the past tense from textbooks. Ls can also try to write sentences in the present tense and their past tense equivalent for homework.

**Option 2: Past Tense**

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 13 A to J – Francisco’s Accident Story Boards, Handout 14 – Francisco’s Accident*

**Time:** 20 - 30 minutes

**Step 1:** Virtually all of the questions in sections E-H can be rephrased in the simple past tense. T can rephrase them orally and write them on the board. Ls can copy them.

**Option 3: Yes/No Questions**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 13 A to J – Francisco’s Accident Story Boards, Handout 14 – Francisco’s Accident*

**Time:** 20 - 30 minutes

**Step 1:** T can scramble the word order of the questions developed in Option 2 above. Working in pairs, Ls rewrite them in the correct order

**Homework:** T can ask Ls to practice creating a few Y/N questions and answering them.

## END OF TOPIC 7

## Francisco's Accident Story Boards



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Handout 13 – B: Identify the Hazards

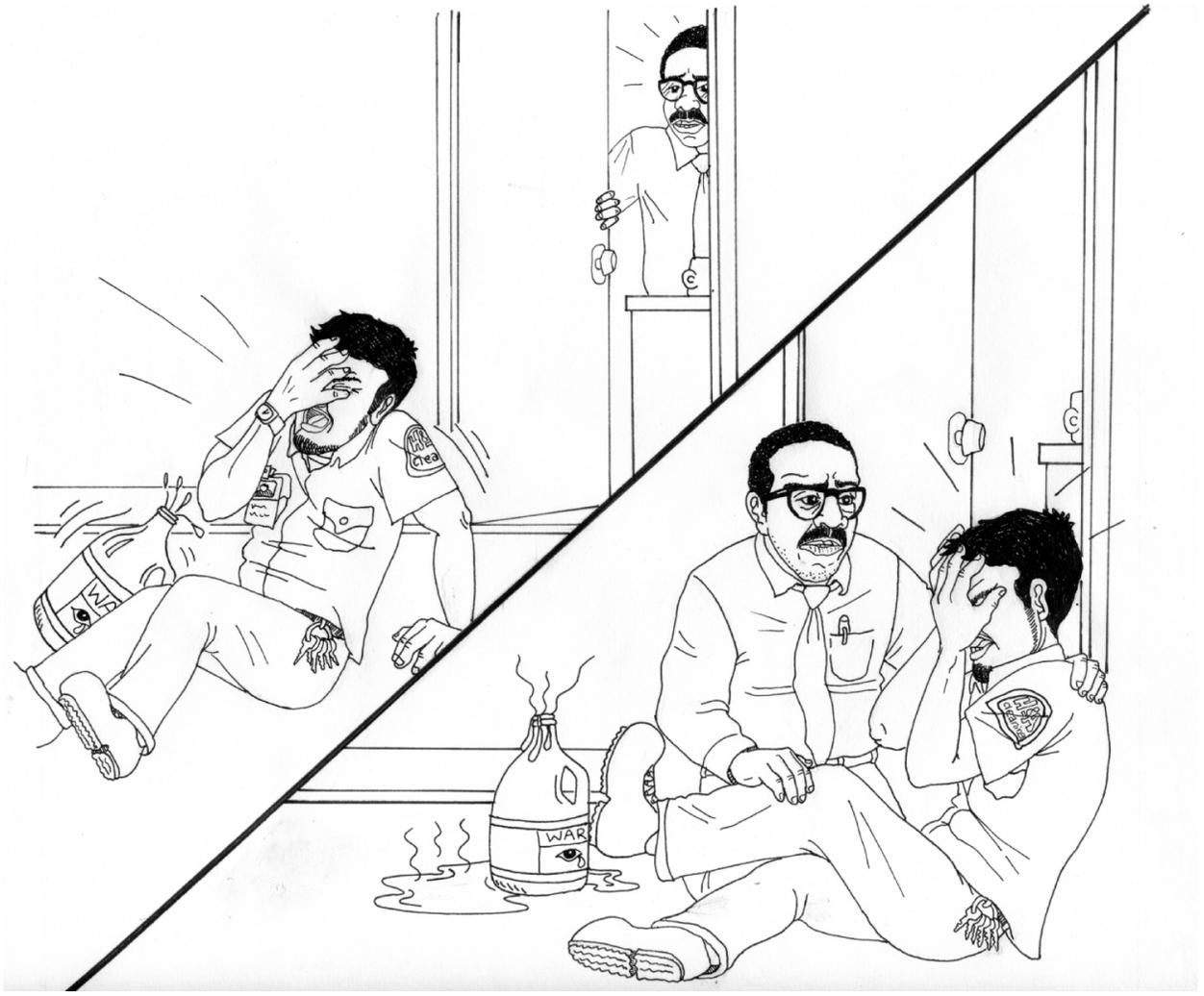


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Handout 13 – C: Identify the Hazards & Injuries



Handout 13– D: Identify the Hazards & Injuries



Handout 13 – E: Identify the Hazards and Injuries





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## **Francisco's Accident**

Francisco Falcones is from Colombia. He has been in this country for six months. He is learning English.

Francisco cleans offices in a big building. He earns \$7.00 per hour. He washes and waxes floors. He cleans bathrooms. He empties waste baskets. He vacuums carpets. He cleans glass doors.

Francisco uses a lot of chemicals at his job, but he doesn't know much about them.

On May 1, 2004, Francisco started work at 7:00 PM. He used a new cleaning product. He opened the bottle. There was a very strong chemical smell. Francisco felt a little dizzy. He poured the cleaning product into a bucket of water. The cleaner splashed Francisco. It burned his eyes. He was not able to see. He shouted, "Help!"

An office worker heard Francisco. He smelled the cleaning product. Then he saw Francisco on the floor. He called 911. Then he said to Francisco, "Wait here. I will look for your supervisor."

The supervisor came. He asked, "What happened?"

Francisco said, "The new cleaning product is too strong. It hurt my eyes."  
The boss said, "Why weren't you careful?"

The ambulance came and took Francisco to the hospital.

The nurse asked Francisco for some information. Francisco told her: "I am 25 years old. I was born on September 8, 1978. My address is 126 Linden Street in Brooklyn, New York, 11231. My phone number is 718-552-1098.

Dr. Robert Stone put a bandage on Francisco's eyes. He told Francisco, "Come back in two weeks."

Francisco told the doctor, “My accident happened at work. Do I get workers’ compensation?”

The doctor said, “I fill out a workers’ compensation insurance form. You have to fill out a form too. Ask a lawyer for a form.”

Workers’ compensation is insurance. It helps workers when they get hurt. Every employer must buy this insurance for workers. That’s the law. Workers compensation insurance can pay some of your wages if you can’t work. It can also pay for your medical bills.

Francisco stayed home for two weeks. He did not work. Then he went back to the hospital. Dr., Stone took his bandage off. Francisco’s eyes felt better, and he was able to see. The doctor said, “You can go back to work tomorrow.”

Francisco found a workers’ compensation attorney in the phone book. The lawyer’s secretary made an appointment for Francisco. She asked him, “Who is your employer? What is the address?”

Francisco said, “I work for H & A Cleaning Co. The address is 278 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. New York, NY 10001. The phone number is (646) 647-1916.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Francisco went to the lawyer. Francisco did not have to pay the lawyer. That’s the law.

## Topic 8: Know Your Rights – OSHA

### Topic Objectives

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To make workers aware that a federal law exists to protect them from unsafe working conditions.
- To let workers know that they have a legal right to request workplace inspections
- To give Ls practice in filling out forms, using authentic materials

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To introduce vocabulary and expressions related to OSHA: **law, right, OSHA, complaint, inspection, and protect**

#### **Language Objectives/Grammar:**

- To practice the construction “have to + verb”
- To practice the modal “can”

### Topic Activities

#### **What is OSHA?**

- Learners are introduced to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration

#### **Completing an OSHA Complaint Form**

- Learners discuss ways workers can use OSHA.

#### **Grammar Practice**

- Learners practice constructing sentences with “have to + verb,” with the modal “can”, and answer “Wh” and Yes/No questions.

### Key Vocabulary / Words to Review

- |        |               |              |
|--------|---------------|--------------|
| • OSHA | • Retaliation | • Inspection |
| • Law  | • Rights      | • Complaint  |

## **Facts about the OSH Act**

***OSHA is the federal law that regulates workplace safety.***

This section is to provide you, as the teacher, the necessary background information on the OSH Act to teach students about their key rights.

### **Basic Provisions**

OSHA is the Federal law that outlines the rules and regulations for workplace safety. OSHA stands for the Occupational Safety and Health Act and also the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the agency within the U.S. Department of Labor that enforces the OSH Act.

The OSHA law covers workers in private industry, except for mine workers, maritime workers, and farm workers, who are governed to varying degrees by other laws. Domestic workers are not covered by OSHA.

In 24 states, government employees are covered by state-run programs, which are supposed to be as effective as the federal law. New York is one of the states with a program for its public employees. They are covered by the Public Employee Safety & Health Act (PESH), which is administered by the NYS Department of Labor.

Under the OSHA law, it is the employer's legal responsibility to keep the workplace free of hazards. There are five basic rights under OSHA, including the right to:

- 1) A healthy and safe workplace;
- 2) Information;
- 3) Training;
- 4) To request that an unsafe workplace situation be changed (and to file a complaint with OSHA about it); and
- 5) Protection from retaliation for reporting unsafe working conditions.

Employers have a "general duty" to provide such protection under the OSH Act to remove, control, and protect against known hazards. The OSHA law also sets standards for specific hazards, i.e., rules which employers must follow to protect workers from substances such as asbestos.

In general, OSHA standards follow accepted industrial hygiene practice: Employers must first try to eliminate the hazards to prevent exposure in the first place, rather than just placing cumbersome safety equipment on workers' bodies. They must control hazards wherever possible through engineering designs (e.g., putting sound baffling equipment on noisy machines, rather than putting earmuffs on workers) or through administrative controls (how work is organized, training, etc.). If risks remain after efforts to (1) remove or (2) control the

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hazard, then the employer must provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers to protect them against the hazard.

The five key rights are explored more here:

**1) Healthy and safe workplace:**

- a. You have the legal right to work free from known hazards that can cause death or serious physical harm to you. This includes having tools and equipment that is in good condition and regularly maintained.
- b. Where an unsafe condition exists, an employer must first attempt to reduce a hazard to a safe level by using engineering or administrative control, for example by substituting less hazardous materials or work practices.
- c. If engineering and administrative controls cannot adequately reduce the hazard of the working condition, then an employer must provide a worker personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost to the worker.

**2) Information:**

- a. Your rights as a worker – the OSHA poster. Distribute copies of the poster and ask if participants have seen it posted at their job.
- b. Information on dangerous chemicals used in your job.
  - i. Explain that employers must have Material Safety Data Sheets for all hazardous chemicals used. Distribute the sample MSDS for review.
  - ii. Employers are to provide training on hazardous chemicals that can be understood by the worker (including in the worker's primary language).
- c. Information on injuries or illnesses that happen at your worksite.
  - i. If there are more than 10 workers on the job, the employer must keep an OSHA 300 log of all injuries and illnesses.
- d. Copies of your own medical records, if kept by the employer.

**3) Training:** your employer must train you to perform your job safely, according to the OSHA rules that apply.

**4) Reporting unsafe working conditions.** You can:

- a. Ask your employer to correct unsafe working conditions;
- b. File a complaint with OSHA anonymously about the condition;
- c. Participate in the OSHA investigation and get information about the resolution.
- d. Workers should call OSHA immediately (1-800-321-OSHA) to report imminent dangers. To count as an "imminent" danger, there must be:

- i. A threat of death or serious physical harm (meaning such severe harm to a part of your body you will lose use or not be able to use it well).
- ii. Exposure to a health hazard (e.g., a chemical) that will shorten the worker's life or substantially reduce the worker's physical or mental abilities (harm does not have to happen immediately).

**5) Protection against retaliation:<sup>1</sup>**

- a. Your employer can't retaliate against you for reporting an unsafe condition or participating in an OSHA investigation. Report instances of retaliation to OSHA immediately, but no later than 30 days after it happens!

When can a worker refuse to do unsafe work and be protected against retaliation?

- OSHA does not necessarily protect a worker who refuses to do work as ordered by the employer, even if that work may be unsafe. Refusing work can result in discipline by the employer.
- However, if a worker reasonably believes, in good faith, that they are being exposed to an **imminent danger**, the worker may refuse to perform the work as ordered.
  - "Good faith" means that even if an imminent danger is not found to exist, the worker had reasonable grounds to believe that it did exist.
  - As noted above, "imminent dangers" are serious, immediate dangers that are likely to cause serious injury.
- While you may have a right to refuse to engage in work that presents an imminent danger, you do not have the right to walk off the job.

**When might you decide to refuse to do work that presents an imminent danger?** Your right to refuse to do a task is protected if **all** of the following conditions are met:

- (1) Where possible, you have asked the employer to eliminate the danger, and the employer failed to do so; **and**
- (2) You refused to work in "good faith." This means that you must genuinely believe that an imminent danger exists. Your refusal cannot be a disguised attempt to harass your employer or disrupt business; and
- (3) A reasonable person would agree that there is a real danger of death or serious injury; and
- (4) There isn't enough time, due to the urgency of the hazard, to get it corrected through regular enforcement channels, such as requesting an OSHA inspection.

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<sup>1</sup> The information on retaliation is drawn nearly verbatim from OSHA's guide, found at: [www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/intro\\_osh/intro\\_to\\_osh\\_guide.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/intro_osh/intro_to_osh_guide.pdf).

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When all of these conditions are met, you should take the following steps:

- (1) Ask your employer to correct the hazard;
- (2) Ask your employer for other work;
- (3) Tell your employer that you won't perform the work unless and until the hazard is corrected; and
- (4) Remain at the worksite until ordered to leave by your employer.

→ If your employer discriminates against you for refusing to perform the dangerous work, **contact OSHA immediately.**

When you file your complaint, you must demonstrate that:

- 1) You were engaged in activity protected under the Act, such as notifying your employer of an unsafe working condition;
- 2) Your employer knew about your protected activity; and
- 3) It was because of your protected activity that the employer took adverse action against you.

Adverse action is generally defined as any action that would dissuade a reasonable employee from engaging in protected activity. Depending upon the circumstances of the case, "adverse" action can include:

- Firing or laying off
- Blacklisting
- Demoting
- Denying overtime or promotion
- Disciplining
- Denial of benefits
- Failure to hire or rehire
- Intimidation
- Making threats
- Reassignment affecting prospects for promotion
- Reducing pay or hours

Employees can file a complaint and request a workplace inspection if the employer does not keep the workplace safe. Complaints may be filed anonymously by employees or by their union or other advocacy organization on behalf of the workers. Employee representatives have a right to accompany the inspector during the inspection. OSHA inspections are unannounced; employers do not have prior notice.

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If the agency finds violation of the OSH Act or regulations, OSHA cites the employer and requires the employer to correct the violation. OSHA citations must be posted in the workplace. In a few very rare instances, employers have been sent to jail for violating the OSH Act.

### **Applicability to Immigrant Workers**

All provisions of OSHA apply to documented and undocumented workers. OSHA will respond to complaints from workers regardless of immigration status. They will inspect workplaces and not ask for information about workers' status.

For more information about this case and for subsequent developments in federal and state law, contact the National Employment Law Project (See Resources Section).

## What is OSHA?

**Option 1:** The Warehouse

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 15 – Warehouse Illustration, Handout 16 A-C - Warehouse Conversation*, before class, T can make a tape of *Handout 16A-C - Warehouse Conversation*.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Step 1:** T shows the class *Handout 15 – Warehouse Illustration*, of an obviously unsafe working condition. T asks Ls, “Is this safe?” “What can workers do about this?”

**Step 2:** Small groups discuss for five minutes. Then they report back their answers. T lists these on the board. Answers are likely to include: “Nothing”, “I don’t know”, “Talk to the boss” and “Ask for help”.

**Step 3:** T then passes out *Handout 16 – Warehouse Conversation* and says, something like, “Let’s listen to and read a story about a group of workers. They had an unsafe job. What did they do?”

T plays the tape twice and class follows along with the text. T asks if there were any words that were not understood, e.g., OSHA, complaint, rights, inspection. T puts these on the board and explains them.

**Step 4:** T asks comprehension questions from the role play: “What are these workers talking about?” “What is OSHA,” etc.

**Step 5:** T chooses four of the stronger readers to role play the conversation then repeats it again with another group of four, if necessary. (Give small groups a set of illustration to look at while they listen.)

**Step 6:** Then small groups discuss what they think workers in the role play should do. Groups report back to the whole class.

**Step 7:** T asks the class questions, such as “Do you know about the OSHA law?” to determine whether anyone is familiar with it. If so, volunteers can report their experience to the whole class.

**Follow Up**

**Activity 1: Reading More About OSHA**

**ELL Level:** Intermediate to Advanced

**Materials:** *Handout 17 - OSHA Poster*

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Step 1:** T hands out copies of the OSHA poster. T can rephrase these rights in simpler English, as necessary.

**Step 2:** T can write these rights on the board and Ls can copy them.

**Step 3:** T can prepare a list of comprehension questions about the poster for homework.

**Follow Up**

**Activity 2: Hearing More About OSHA**

**ELL Level:** Intermediate

**Preparation:** Ask a guest speaker from an organization which has experience filing OSHA complaints to come to the class.

**Time:** 1 hour to 1 hr, 15 minutes

**Step 1:** T can prepare the class by asking small groups to generate WH and Y/N questions about OSHA for the speaker. Each small group's recorder puts one question on the board. T corrects them for grammatical accuracy. This process is repeated until all of the questions from each small group have been put on the board. Ls copy the corrected questions.

**Step 2:** Speaker discusses examples of OSHA complaints which have been filed and their results. Referring to their list of questions, Ls ask the speaker questions about OSHA and about what they can do as individuals and in groups to improve their working conditions.

## Grammar Practice

**Option 1:** Have to + Verb

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner  
to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 15 – Warehouse Illustration, Handout 16 – Warehouse Conversation*

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

**Step 1:** T can discuss the construction “have to + verb,” which appears several times in *Handout 16 – Warehouse Conversation*. T reviews the examples in the conversation and models a few additional examples.

**Step 2:** Then T goes around the room asking everyone to say a “have to” question or sentence, etc.

**Step 3:** Then this can be followed with students as two person role plays, in which one person says, “I have to...” , or “Do you have to...?” and a partner responds appropriately. This can be modeled in front of the class and then partners can practice in pairs, using their own examples.

**Step 4:** T can use a grammar book with “have to” activities in it for homework and additional practice.

**Option 2: Modal “Can”**

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** *Handout 15 – Warehouse Illustration, Handout 16 – Warehouse Conversation*

**Time:** 30 -45 minutes

The above option can be done with the modal “can”, which also appears a few times in *Handout 16 – Warehouse Conversation*.

**Option 3: WH and Yes/No Questions**

**ELL Level:** Mid-level Beginner to Intermediate

**Materials:** none

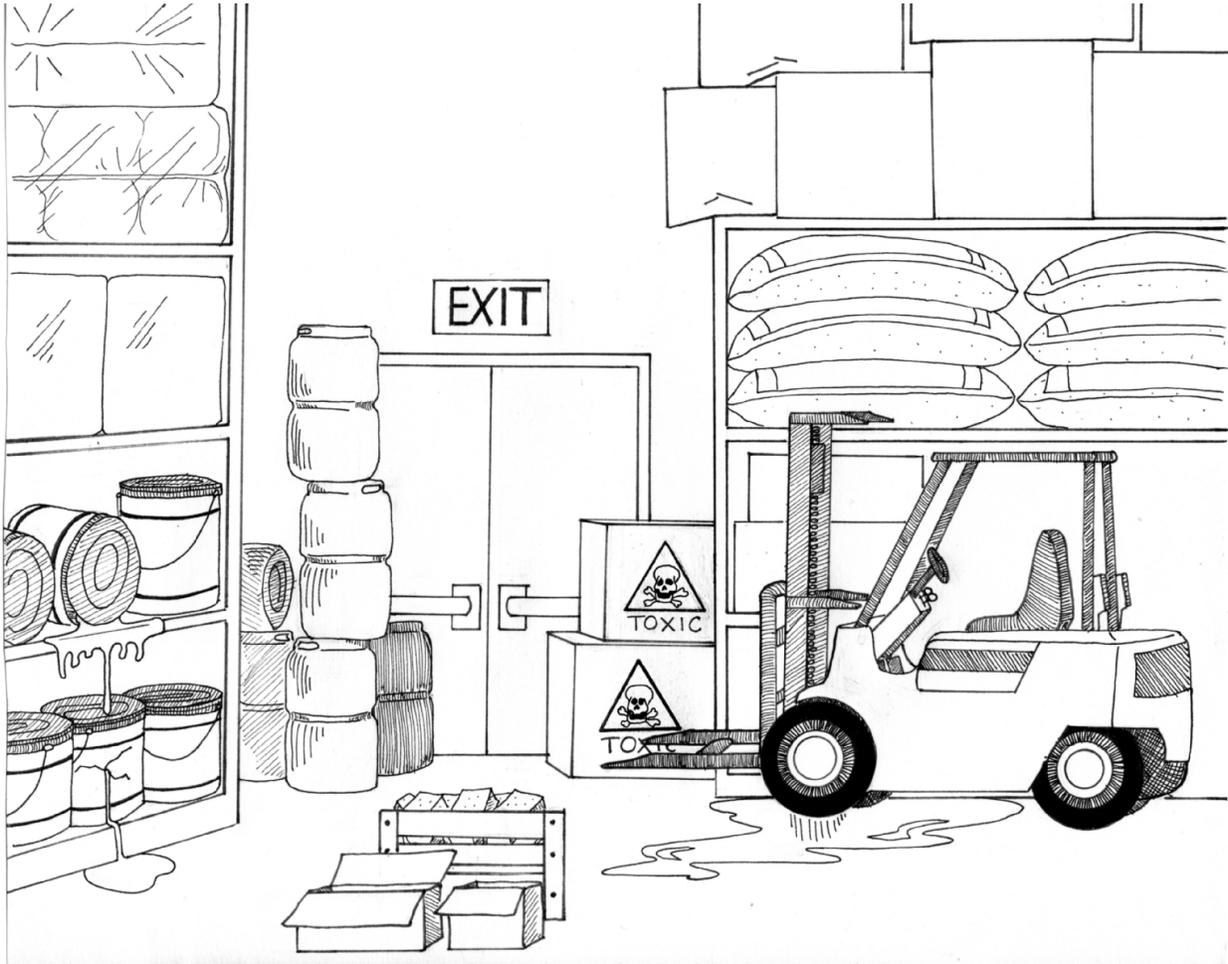
**Time:** 30-45 minutes

More practice in generating WH and Y/N questions. T may want to introduce tag questions and give additional practice with examples from a grammar text.

## END OF TOPIC 8

## Handout 15: Warehouse Illustration

### Can You Identify the Hazards?



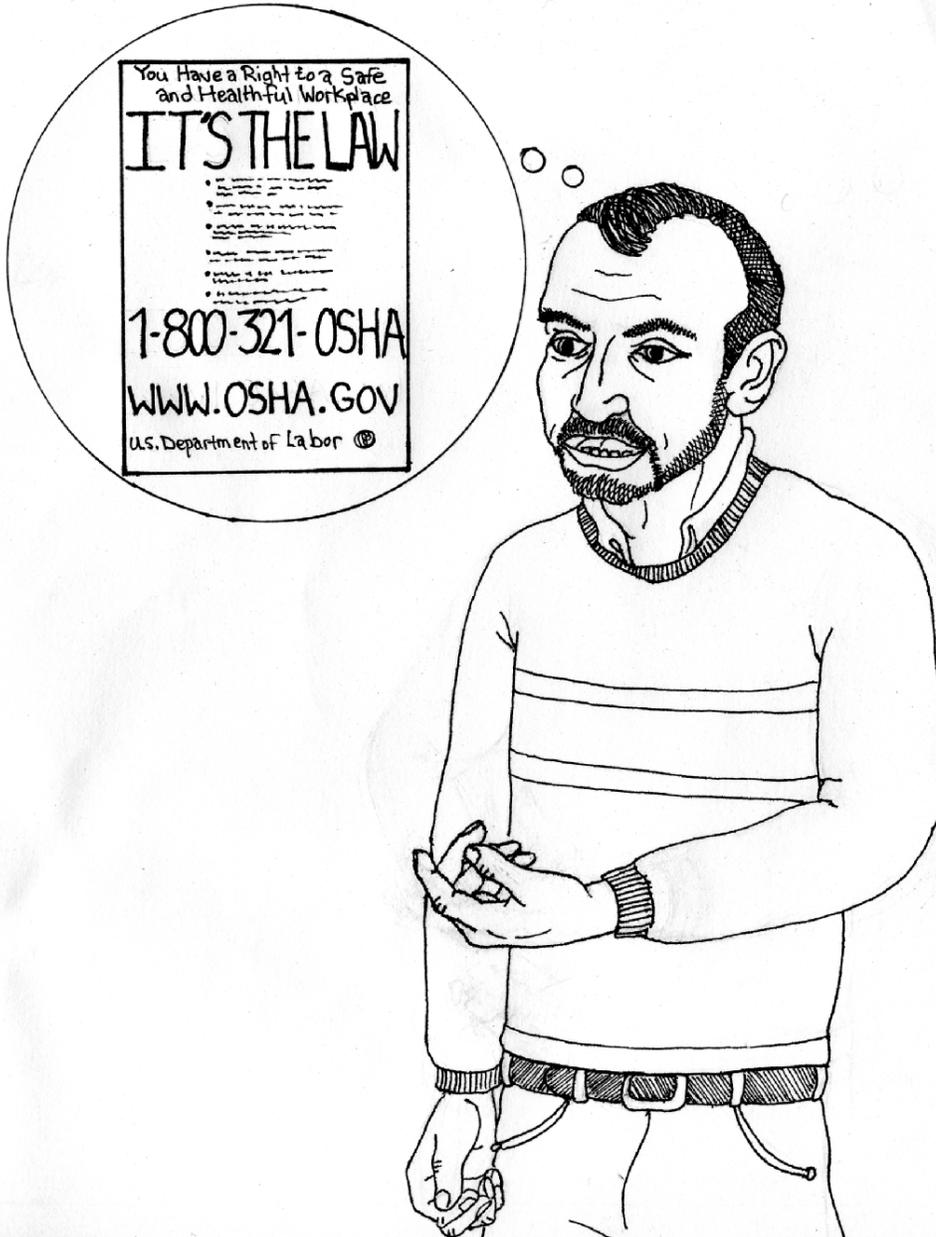
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## Handout 15-A: Warehouse Illustration

Can You Identify the Hazards?



## Handout 15 - B



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## Handout 15 - C

### Can You Identify the Hazards?



## **Handout 16: Warehouse Conversation**

Paolo, Arshi, Mohammed, and Yu Jin work in a warehouse.

**Mohammed:** Rafael had an accident! He went to the hospital!

**Paolo:** Oh no! What happened?

**Mohammed:** A forklift truck drove into him! The brakes didn't work.

**Paolo:** This is very bad. Forklifts are dangerous.  
There was another accident last week. Pierre's forklift turned over. He hurt his shoulder.

**Yu Jin:** I am not surprised. There are many problems here. It's crowded; there are boxes in the aisles.  
It's dark, because there are not enough lights in the ceiling.  
The floor is slippery, too.

**Paolo:** Why is this place so unsafe? This is America! I came here for a better life.

**Arshi:** Our warehouse is not safe, but workers in America have a right to a safe job.

There is a safety law. It is called OSHA. My English teacher told me about it.

**Mohammed:** What is OSHA?

**Arshi:** It is part of the government.

**Yu Jin:** Let's call OSHA. Maybe OSHA can help us.

- Mohammed:** Don't do it! OSHA will talk to the boss. The boss will fire us. Or maybe OSHA will tell the ICE. They will send us back home.
- Arshi:** But we can call OSHA about our warehouse, and we don't have to tell our names.
- Paolo:** Really?
- Arshi:** Yes, I think so. If the OSHA inspector finds bad conditions here, he can tell the boss, "Fix the hazards."
- Mohammed:** Well, I don't know. I have to keep this job. I don't want trouble.
- Yu Jin:** I don't want trouble either. But I don't want to risk my life.
- Arshi:** Let's talk to my English teacher. Maybe she can help us.

## You Have a Right to a Safe and Healthful Workplace.

# IT'S THE LAW!

- You have the right to notify your employer or OSHA about workplace hazards. You may ask OSHA to keep your name confidential.
- You have the right to request an OSHA inspection if you believe that there are unsafe and unhealthful conditions in your workplace. You or your representative may participate in the inspection.
- You can file a complaint with OSHA within 30 days of discrimination by your employer for making safety and health complaints or for exercising your rights under the *OSH Act*.
- You have a right to see OSHA citations issued to your employer. Your employer must post the citations at or near the place of the alleged violation.
- Your employer must correct workplace hazards by the date indicated on the citation and must certify that these hazards have been reduced or eliminated.
- You have the right to copies of your medical records or records of your exposure to toxic and harmful substances or conditions.
- Your employer must post this notice in your workplace.

The *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act)*, P.L. 91-596, assures safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women throughout the Nation. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, in the U.S. Department of Labor, has the primary responsibility for administering the *OSH Act*. The rights listed here may vary depending on the particular circumstances. To file a complaint, report an emergency, or seek OSHA advice, assistance, or products, call 1-800-321-OSHA or your nearest OSHA office: • Atlanta (404) 562-2300 • Boston (617) 565-9860 • Chicago (312) 353-2220 • Dallas (214) 767-4731 • Denver (303) 844-1600 • Kansas City (816) 426-5861 • New York (212) 337-2378 • Philadelphia (215) 861-4900 • San Francisco (415) 975-4310 • Seattle (206) 553-5930. Teletypewriter (TTY) number is 1-877-889-5627. To file a complaint online or obtain more information on OSHA federal and state programs, visit OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). If your workplace is in a state operating under an OSHA-approved plan, your employer must post the required state equivalent of this poster.

# 1-800-321-OSHA [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

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## **Topic 9: Worker Health & Safety Past and Present**

### **Topic Objectives**

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To provide Ls with the historical context for the need for the OSH Act
- To provide Ls with the present-day context, and the ongoing challenges to worker health and safety.

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To introduce vocabulary about statistics

### **Topic Activities**

- Read and discuss the Unknown Factory Story, Handout 18.
- Read and discuss the statistics on workplace injuries.

### **Key Vocabulary / Words to Review**

- Disaster
- Fatality
- Occupational illness
- Work-related

**Activity 1: Unknown Factory Story**

**ELL Level:** Intermediate to Advanced

**Materials:** Copies of Handout 18 – *Unknown Factory Story*

**Time:** 45- 60 minutes

**Step 1:** T distributes copies of Handout 18. T asks for volunteers to read story aloud, 2-3 sentences per volunteer. T asks Ls to identify vocabulary they do not understand, and makes list on the board.

**Step 2:** T leads class discussion using these questions:

1. Where in do you think this took place? What in NYC?
2. What kind of factory do you think it was?
3. What year do you think it happened?
4. How many days a week and hours a day do you think these workers worked?
5. Who do you think these workers were? Where were they from? Were the men or women? How old do you think they were?
6. What are some of the reasons this disaster happened?

**Step 3:** Review answers with Ls. Ask for commentaries about what was surprising or not.

- The fire took place in New York City on March 25, 1911.
- The factory was located at 23-29 Washington Place, between Greene Street and Washington Square East in Manhattan, New York City (Greenwich Village).
- The Triangle Waist Company was one of the largest blouse makers in New York City, specializing in “shirtwaists,” the very popular women's blouse of the era.
- 146 people died as a result of the fire: 129 women and 17 men.
- Many of the workers were young women, most of them Italian and European Jewish immigrants between 16 and 23 years old. Some were as young as 14.
- They worked nine hours a day on weekdays, plus seven hours on Saturdays (notably less than many garment factory workers today).

**Activity 2: Current Day Snapshot**

**ELL Level:** Intermediate to Advanced

**Materials:** None

**Time:** 30-40 minutes

**Materials:** none

**Step 1:** T asks Ls the following questions:<sup>2</sup>

- 1) In 2009, how many workers were killed at the workplace each day in the U.S.? A: 12 workers per day.
- 2) In 2009, how many more workers died during the year (not at the worksite) as a result of diseases caused by conditions at work? A: an estimated 50,000 workers.
- 3) How many workers suffer non-fatal work-related injuries or illnesses each year? A: 8-12 million.
- 4) What immigrant population has the greatest risk of dying on the job? A: Latino workers.
- 5) The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire happened in 1911. When did the U.S. government pass OSHA? A: 1970.

**Step 2:** T asks Ls to discuss why they think there are still so many unsafe conditions on the job.

## END OF TOPIC 9

<sup>2</sup> Statistics taken from the AFL-CIO Report *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*, April 2001. Available at [http://www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/doj\\_2011.cfm](http://www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/doj_2011.cfm).

## **HANDOUT 18: UNKNOWN FACTORY FIRE**

March 25, 4:40pm. A fire starts in a factory. The factory is in a 10-story building, on floors 8, 9, and 10. There is no fire alarm in the factory. Workers on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor use the factory phone to call workers on the 10<sup>th</sup> to warn them about the fire. But there is no way to contact workers on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor.

Workers begin to panic. There is only a small elevator located in the back of the building and one stairway. Every day, the managers lock all the other doors, exits, and the front elevator. The managers say they do this to stop employee “theft.”

The building has only one fire escape, which is poorly built and in disrepair. Workers try to use it. But it collapses, and workers fall nearly 100 feet.

The fire department arrives. But their ladders only reach the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. They turn on their hoses, but water pressure is weak – the water only reaches the 7<sup>th</sup> floor. The firefighters hold out nets to catch victims. But the nets are weak, and rip apart as workers fall.

By the end of the disaster, 146 of the 500 factory workers died. Many who died had jumped, fallen or were pushed from the top floors windows.

Tragically, there had already been four fires reported in this factory previously.

Investigations later showed the fire started when a cigarette was thrown in a waste bin that had accumulated over two months’ worth of trash.

### **Questions for Discussion:**

- 1) Where do you think this took place?
- 2) What kind of factory do you think it was?
- 3) What year do you think it happened?
- 4) How many days a week and hours a day do you think these workers worked?
- 5) Who do you think these workers were? Where were they from? Were the men or women? How old do you think they were?
- 6) What are some of the reasons this disaster happened?

## **Topic 10: Where Do We Go From Here?**

### **Topic Objectives**

#### **Strategic Objectives/Communication Objectives:**

- To help Ls reflect on changes they could make to improve their own working conditions
- To make Ls aware of advocacy organizations which can help them improve working conditions

#### **Language Objectives/Vocabulary on Content:**

- To introduce vocabulary about taking action

#### **Language Objectives:**

- To practice Y/N & WH question formation
- To review commands, requests, suggestions
- To review future tense and introduce modals expressing conditional situations (could, would)

### **Topic Activities**

- Guest speaker from a safety advocacy organization
- Next steps for you
- Help for the ABC Garment, Inc. workers

### **Key Vocabulary / Words to Review**

- Organizing
- Safety committee
- Union
- Strike
- Community organization

Note to Teachers:

In this final topic, Ls reflect on their own working conditions and the possibilities for change. This topic also serves as a short review of the course, as it draws on earlier topics (e.g., identifying hazards, inspecting the workplace, talking with co-workers, calling OSHA). A collective approach to problem solving should be emphasized. **Workers should not leave this topic with the notion that they should act alone to improve their working conditions. Workers should be made aware of workplace safety advocacy groups that can help them.**

If Ls do not have enough fluency to understand and discuss the ideas in this topic, we recommend conducting the sessions in the native language if the class speaks the same native language, or conducting the class bilingually, using an interpreter.

If Ls come from many different countries, perhaps a beginner class and intermediate class could both attend the same session. Intermediate Ls could pair up with beginner Ls and help to interpret.

## Next Steps

### Option 1: Getting Advice

**ELL Level:** Beginners (with interpreters) to Intermediate

**Materials:** None

**Time:** 45- 60 minutes

#### Advanced

**Preparation:** T invites a guest speaker from a workplace safety advocacy organization.

**Step 1:** T explains that a guest speaker is coming to talk about how to get safer working conditions. T asks class what questions they would like to ask the speaker. Volunteers write their questions on the board.

What is your organization? What is your address? What is your phone number? How can you help us? Do we have to pay for your help?

T and the class correct the questions for grammatical errors (in word order, verb tense, etc.). The corrected questions are left on the board.

**Step 2:** T introduces speaker.

**Step 3:** Speaker explains the purpose of their organization and gives a couple of brief examples of how they help workers achieve safe working conditions. The speaker emphasizes the importance of taking collective action. Class questions and discussion.

**Step 4:** To summarize and review, T directs speaker to the questions on the board to make sure that the questions generated by the class have been answered.

#### Grammar Follow-Up: Question formation

Referring back to the questions for the guest speaker which were generated by the class, T can give additional practice in question formation, focusing on a particular area as needed (e.g., making past tense questions vs. present tense questions, making WH questions vs. Y/N questions, etc.).

**Option 2: Next Steps for You**

**ELL Level:** Beginners (with interpreters) to Intermediate

**Materials:** Learner Artwork from Topic 1  
Photo collection from Topic 1

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Step 1:** T asks class to think again about the hazards of their jobs and to think about what they can do to change their working conditions: e.g., “How can you make your job safer?”

T breaks class into groups of shared occupations, if possible (e.g.: construction workers, lawn/landscape, home health aides, etc.). T asks groups to state the hazards of their workplace or industry and to say what they can do to fix them.

If there are not enough Ls who share common occupations, T can break the class into pairs or threes.

**Step 2:** T gives each person the drawing of their working conditions made in Topic 1 or Ls choose a photo which is appropriate to their occupation.

**Step 3:** Referring to their drawing or photo, each person orally: 1) reviews the hazards of their job with the others in the group, and 2) talks about what they might do about their situation.

T models this first orally and then writes it on the board (e.g., “I work with chemicals. I can talk to my co-workers. We can ask the boss for gloves”)

Everyone writes a sentence about what they might do in their own situations. As the groups work on the task, T circulates and helps recorders with grammar, as needed.

### Grammar Follow-Up: Making requests

**ELL:** Advanced Beginners to Intermediate

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Step 1:** On the blackboard, volunteers write sentences about the next steps they're going to take on their job.

Class reviews these and corrects them.

**Step 2:** T helps the class rewrite the sentences into a dialogue form on the blackboard.

**Step 3:** Volunteers from each small group role play the dialogues, in which a group of workers ask the boss for improvements

### Grammar Follow-Up: Future tense, modals (can, could)

**ELL Level:** Intermediate

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Step 1:** Volunteers write their sentences on the blackboard.  
Class reviews these and corrects them.

**Step 2:** Depending the class level and need, T might have the class work on changing the intent of the verbs in the sentences that are on the board, emphasizing different tenses and moods: "can" vs. "going to" or "will"; "could" vs. "can". (We **can** ask the boss for gloves, vs. We **will** ask the boss for gloves)

**Step 3:** Additional practice on this using grammar textbook exercises.

Note to teachers.

This activity has two parts, each of which uses a set of “strategy cards” which the T makes ahead of time. In the first part, Ls develop a strategy to help the workers in the ABC Garment, Inc. Factory get better working conditions. The strategy is a series of steps. The second part is a concentration game, using the same cards.

**Option 3: Help Those Workers!**

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginners to Intermediate

**Materials:** Handout 4 (ABC Garment, Inc. Factory)  
Handout 19 (Strategy Cards)  
Masking tape

**Time:** 60-75 minutes

**Advanced preparation**

Handouts 19 are sheets listing possible actions that a group of workers might make to improve their working conditions, e.g.,

- learn more about the hazards in the workplace
- talk to co-workers
- get advice from a community organization
- create a safety committee
- inspect the workplace
- ask the boss to make the place safer
- call in OSHA
- refuse to work at a dangerous job
- contact the media
- go on strike
- form a union

T photocopies Handout 19 and cuts them up into sets for small groups. (Each group should have one full set of the handout, as well as a couple of blank sheets to write activities not listed here)  
T keeps a set of enlarged cards.

*Note to teachers:*

When beginning any effort to bring about change, most organizers suggest that the first activities should include the recruitment of more activists, and gathering more information about the issues you are tackling. These actions will help to build greater strength and unity among the participants, and will help to prepare them for a possible long battle ahead!

When you are facilitating this activity with your students, it is important to emphasize that there are no right and no wrong answers. There is no single way to order the activity cards they choose, but less risky activities usually come first, i.e., “talking with co-workers and learning about hazards” come before contact with the media. When people give their responses, ask them to explain why they would take these steps in the order presented. Use the time to discuss the pros and cons of any activity. The goal of the exercise is to get people thinking about the various ways to address a problem, so people’s experiences, along with proven organizing strategies, can help make this exercise an interesting one.

**Option 3: Help These Workers!**

- Step 1:** T shows the illustration of the ABC Garment, Inc. Factory (Handout 4).
- T asks the class: “How can we help the ABC Garment workers make their workplace safer? What steps can they take?”
- T asks class what the word “steps” means. T asks the class if they know the expressions “take next steps”, “make a plan”
- T tapes the picture cards from her set in a column on the board. T tapes the corresponding word cards in another column. T reviews the vocabulary on the word cards with the class.
- Step 2:** Then T scrambles up the cards on the board. A volunteer from each group matches each word card with its pictured equivalent. When the match is completed, T asks Ls to study the word card list for a couple of minutes. Then T removes both sets of cards from the board and passes out the set of word cards to the group. Now the groups have a set of both the picture cards and the word cards.
- Step 3:** The groups put the word cards face down and picture cards face down and scramble them. Then they play concentration, matching picture cards to word cards. When they have finished, one volunteer from each group comes up to the board and once again tapes the pictures from the teacher’s set back on the board next to their word card equivalents. Groups compare how well they did with the set on the board.

**Option 4: How Can We Make  
Our Jobs Safer?**

**ELL Level:** Advanced Beginners to Intermediate

**Materials:** Handout 19 - Strategy Cards  
Masking Tape

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Advance Prep:** T should make sets of strategy cards for small groups.

**Step 1:** T asks the class, “How can we make our own jobs safer?” What steps could we take to prevent injuries and illnesses on the job?

T asks the class what the word “step” means, T asks the class if they know the expressions “take steps”, “make a plan”.

T tapes the strategy cards from her set on the board (no specific order).

T reviews the vocabulary on the cards with the class.

**Step 2:** T moves the Ls into small groups, then asks them to talk about hazards that exist in their workplaces. A recorder for each group should list the hazards mentioned.

**Step 3:** After about 5-10 minutes of discussion, T then asks the group to pick one of the issues that has been mentioned. Once an issue has been identified and agreed to by the group, T then asks, “What steps could you take to address this problem?”, using the strategy cards.

T passes out a set of strategy cards to each group and asks Ls to place their strategy cards in the order they would like to take those actions. (Note: the Ls should be encouraged to use all cards, but they don’t have to use all if they, as a group, choose not to do so.)

**Step 4:** Groups report to the whole group their responses. T leads discussion, and emphasizes that when making such a plan in a real workplace, workers should seek the support of their union, or their community or faith-based group to help strengthen their position. The important point is that workers do not act alone, and that power is greater in numbers.

## Grammar Follow-Up: **Commands, Requests, Suggestions**

**ELL Level:** Advanced beginner to Intermediate

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** A list of suggestions, requests, commands in random order

**Advance preparation:** T makes a scrambled list of suggestions, requests, commands.

Each of the strategy word cards discussed above is written in the form of a suggestion. T explains that the strategy word cards are suggestions. T asks volunteers to think of other examples of suggestions and to put them on the board.

T can then review with the class the meaning of a suggestion, versus a command or a request and the grammatical uniqueness of this form of sentence (no subject stated explicitly; begins with a capitalized verb). To model the activity and get the class moving physically, T can first give commands, requests, suggestions which require them to move (e.g., "Stand up", "Please shake hands with a classmate from another country", "Go stand near the window; it will wake you up") and then to identify which sentence is a command, request, or suggestion.

Then T makes three columns on the board: commands, suggestions, requests.

T passes out a list of scrambled commands, requests, suggestions. Ls must categorize each by putting C, R, or S next to each sentence.

T asks pairs to think of two additional examples of each. Class discussion.

**Homework: How Can I Make my Job Safer?**

**ELL Level: Intermediate to Advanced**

**Materials: Handout 20**

Ls should list some problems in their workplaces, and to write possible solutions to these problems.

If Ls do not work outside the home, they can interview a friend/household member about his/her job, and list the problem and the solutions. Ls should then share their responses with class members.

## **END OF TOPIC 10**

**learn more about hazards in  
the workplace**

**talk to co-workers**

**get advice from a community  
organization**

**create a safety committee**

**inspect the workplace**

**ask the boss to make the place  
safer**

**call in OSHA**

# **contact the media**

# **form a union**

# Learn more about hazards in the workplace

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# Talk to co-workers

# Get advice from a community organization

# Create a safety committee

# Inspect the workplace

# **Ask the boss to make the place safer**

# Call in OSHA

# Contact the media

# Form a union

## HOW CAN I MAKE MY JOB SAFER?

HAZARD ON THE JOB

WHAT CAN I/WE DO?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Resources**

*for resolving occupational health and safety problems in the New York City area*

### **Technical Assistance**

#### **COSH Groups**

There is a national network of independent non-profit organizations dedicated to helping unionized and non-unionized workers achieve safer working conditions. These organizations, known as COSH Groups, operate in 17 states. For non-unionized workers, a COSH group is the first place to turn for help. COSHes have technical information about hazards and expertise in solving workplace environmental problems. They also refer injured workers to appropriate resources for medical and legal help. COSH groups have become more aware of the needs of immigrant workers in recent years and have begun working with community organizations that serve immigrants.

#### **NYCOSH, the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health**

116 John Street, Suite 604, New York, NY 10038

212-227-6440

[www.nycosh.org](http://www.nycosh.org)

The NYCOSH website lists the other COSH groups.

#### **Occupational Health Clinics**

These clinics specialize in worker health and safety and provide health care services. Services are charged based on an income scale, they take patients without health insurance, and they do not ask about a worker's immigration status.

#### **Mt. Sinai- Irving J. Selikoff Center for Occupational & Environmental Medicine**

345 E 102nd Street

New York, NY 10029-5611

(212) 241-5555 Manhattan (Mount Sinai Medical Center)

(718) 278-2736 Queens (Mount Sinai Hospital of Queens)

(914) 964-4737 Yonkers (Hudson Valley Occupational Medicine Center, located at St. John's Riverside Hospital)

#### **NYU/Bellevue Occupational & Environmental Medicine Clinic**

##### **Bellevue Hospital**

First Ave. & 27 Street, Room CD 349

New York, NY 10016

(212) 562-4572

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## **Long Island Occupational and Environmental Health Center (LIOEHC)**

### **Suffolk LIOEHC – Medford Site**

1741 B North Ocean Avenue  
Medford, NY 11763  
(631) 289-1428

### **Nassau LIOEHC – Plainview Site**

558 Old Country Road  
Plainview, NY 11803  
(516) 433-1543

### **Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics (AOEC)**

1010 Vermont Avenue NW, #513  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 347-4976

## **Legal Assistance**

Directory of fee legal services in New York visit: <http://lawhelp.org/ny/>

### **Make the Road New York:**

Make the Road New York is a community-based organization that organizes with low-income, primarily immigrant New Yorkers, on the pressing issues of the community, with particular focus on workers' rights. Make the Road has a legal team that provides support services to members of the organization. <http://www.maketheroad.org>

Locations:

**Bushwick, Brooklyn:**  
301 Grove Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11237  
(718) 418-7690

**Jackson Heights, Queens:**  
92-10 Roosevelt Avenue  
Jackson Heights, NY 11372  
(718) 565-8500

**Port Richmond, S. Island:**  
479 Port Richmond Ave.  
Staten Island, NY 10302  
(718) 727-1222

### **MFY Legal Services, Inc.**

MFY provides free legal assistance to residents of New York City on a wide range of civil legal issues, prioritizing services to vulnerable and under-served populations.

299 Broadway, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10007  
(212) 417-3700

<http://www.mfy.org/>

### **Legal Aid Society**

The Legal Aid Society is a private, not-for-profit legal services organization that provides quality legal representation to low-income New Yorkers.

Main office

199 Water Street

New York, NY 10038

(212) 577-3300

<http://www.legal-aid.org>

### **New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)**

NYLAG is a not-for-profit law office that provides free civil legal services to low income New Yorkers who would otherwise be unable to afford or receive legal assistance.

7 Hanover Square, 18th Floor

New York, NY 10004

(212) 613-5000

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

<http://www.nylag.org/>

## **Governmental Assistance**

### **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**

#### **US Dept. of Labor, OSHA Region II**

201 Varick St., Room 670

New York, NY 10014

(212) 337-2378

### **Public Employees Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau**

People who work for a New York State or New York City agency can contact PESH

One Hudson Square, 75 Varick Street (7th Floor)

New York, NY 10013

(212) 352-6132)

## **Labor Union Information & Assistance**

Unionized workers can contact their union as the first step in resolving hazards. Some of the larger unions have health and safety departments, which are very experienced in educating their members about hazards and helping them fight for safer working conditions. Workers

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who are unsure about whether their union has any health and safety resources or who do not receive help from their union can contact the COSH group (see below) in their area to find out.

### **AFL-CIO**

The AFL-CIO website <http://www.aflcio.org> is an important source of information about issues facing the labor movement today. The website's health and safety section often contains suggestions about how workers can organize to improve their working conditions and examples of how groups of workers have achieved results.

### **LaborNet**

Another website, [www.labor.net](http://www.labor.net), contains labor news stories from around the country which are also geared to a literate audience.

## **Community Organizations & Advocacy Groups**

### **National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS) Brooklyn Workers Center -**

93 Third Avenue

Brooklyn (corner of Bergen St. & Third Ave.)

(718) 625-9091

Labor rights clinics available by appointment.

### **El Centro del Inmigrante**

1546 Castleton Ave

Staten Island, NY 10302

[info@elcentronyc.org](mailto:info@elcentronyc.org)

718 420 6466

<http://elcentronyc.org/>

ESL, G.E.D. and Literacy classes, labor organizing, health education and screenings, family and immigrant rights services, immigration counseling, legal assistance, social activities, food and clothing distribution and community service.

### **Lower East Side Workers Center**

59 Hester Street between Ludlow and Essex

212-358-0295

[nmass@yahoo.com](mailto:nmass@yahoo.com)

<http://www.nmass.org>

Economic and workplace justice organizing for low-wage immigrant workers; injured workers' group; legislative and organizing activities around worker compensation rights

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**Project Hospitality**

100 Park Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10302  
(718) 448-1544

<http://www.projecthospitality.org>

Family and immigrant rights services, ESL classes, health education and screenings, day laborer center.

**Restaurant Opportunity Center of New York (ROC-NY)**

275 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1703  
New York, NY 10001  
212-343-1771

<http://www.rocny.org>

Organizes restaurant workers dedicated to improving conditions and raising issues of concern

**Tepeyac Association of New York**

251 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011  
212-633-7108 joelmagallan@gmail.com

Education and service center for Mexican immigrants; rights, resources and leadership development

**Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center**

19 Market Street  
Morristown, NJ  
973-538-2035 07960

[windofthespirit@verizon.net](mailto:windofthespirit@verizon.net)

Labor rights issues; ESL classes, computer literacy classes, cultural events

**Workplace Project**

91 N. Franklin Street, Suite 207  
Hempstead, NY 11550  
516-565-5377

<http://www.workplaceprojectny.org>

[workplace@igc.org](mailto:workplace@igc.org)

Organizes low-wage Latino immigrants; provides community education, leadership training, and labor-related support. Day laborer center.