

## Societal Issues – Grade 11

### ANSWERS: Optional Exercise: Non-traditional Work Arrangements

1. **Part-time work:** You are working after school for 15 hours a week in a convenience store. You are often alone in the store.

#### ***What are the health and safety challenges?***

- Harder to get health and safety training
- Harder to participate in injury prevention activities — e.g., joint health and safety committee
- Working alone
- Chance of violence or robbery since handling cash

#### ***What can you do about it?***

- Ensure you know your legal rights and responsibilities.
- Find out who the joint health and safety committee members/health and safety representatives are and introduce yourself. Ask them questions and volunteer to help out if you can. Read their notices and minutes, which may be posted on the bulletin board.
- Learn how to recognize hazards.
- Ask your supervisor questions about anything you are not sure of.
- Ensure you receive safety training.
- Tell your supervisor about any hazards you notice.
- Ask your employer for the policy on violence and harassment so that you know what you are expected to do.
- Make sure area is well lit.
- Ask someone to check on you periodically when you are alone.
- Learn how to deal with conflict.
- Stay near the telephone so you can get help if needed. Make sure the phone numbers are posted there — including the phone number and address for the store.
- Ask for a security button/alarm.
- Do not keep large amounts of money in the cash register. Put it in the safe frequently.
- Do not ignore your intuition — if you feel unsafe, do something about it. Tell your employer.

2. **12-hour shifts:** You are working 12-hour shifts in a factory for the summer.

***What are the health and safety challenges?***

- Possible fatigue — more prone to injuries when tired
- Possible overexposure to chemicals, noise etc., because of the longer hours in one stretch
- Less time between shifts to rest, and clear body from any chemical exposures

***What can you do about it?***

- Ensure you know your legal rights and responsibilities.
- Get enough rest on workdays — this may mean curtailing social activities.
- Ask about exposure to hazardous chemicals, noise etc. Are they still within safe levels with the longer hours? Read the MSDS and labels. Use your personal protective equipment as recommended.
- Ensure you receive safety training.
- Use rest breaks for resting and stretching — sit if you work standing, stand/walk if you work sitting.
- Break up long periods of doing the same task with other tasks that require you to do something completely different.
- Eat healthy food and follow the Canada Food Guide. Avoid caffeine.

3. **Small business:** You are working for your uncle in his landscaping business for the summer.

***What are the health and safety challenges?***

- Fewer sources of health and safety information
- Limited time and resources for health and safety

***What can you do about it?***

- Ensure you know your legal rights and responsibilities.
- Ensure you receive safety training.
- Ask your uncle to train you for the job. Keep on asking if you are not sure what you are doing. Convince him that injuries are very expensive and preventing one will actually save him time and money — as well, it will keep you (his niece or nephew) safe.
- Learn how to recognize hazards that might be present. Research on the internet, call a Health and Safety Association — get information on the type of workplace so you know what to look for.
- Tell your supervisor about any hazards you notice.

4. **Temporary Contract:** You are working for the local municipality at the swimming pool on a temporary contract, painting the changeroom building.

***What are the health and safety challenges?***

- Need health and safety training, especially on ergonomics, handling paint and chemicals, and fall protection since the job involves climbing ladders
- Need to understand and follow the municipality's health and safety rules

***What can you do about it?***

- Ensure you know your legal rights and responsibilities.
- Ensure you know the municipality's health and safety rules — and follow them.
- Ensure you receive safety training.
- Learn how to recognize hazards that might be present. Research on the internet, call a Health and Safety Association, talk to your parents or experienced workers — get information on the type of workplace so you know what to look for. Ask for, and read the MSDS for the paint and the paint thinner you will be using.
- Use ladders safely.
- Tell your supervisor about any hazards you notice.
- Find out who the joint health and safety committee members are and introduce yourself. Ask them questions and volunteer to help out if you can. Read their notices and minutes which may be posted on the bulletin board.

5. **Work at home:** You are working for a large telemarketing company from your home using your computer.

***What are the health and safety challenges?***

- Isolated worker with off-site supervision, little social contact
- Furniture and equipment can be make-shift and not meant for long hours of use at a computer

***What can you do about it?***

- Ensure you know your legal rights and responsibilities.
- Set up your work area so you can use a good body position (see the Ergonomics chapter). Ask your employer if they supply adjustable workstations for your use at home.
- Take regular rest breaks and stand up and stretch your muscles.
- Make a point of having some type of social interaction through the day — call a colleague to discuss work issues, or when taking a rest break, call a friend.