

▶ CONSULTING WITH YOUNG WORKERS ON OHS

Why do I have to consult with my young workers on OH&S?

Division 2 of the OHS Act 2000 requires employers to consult with their workers when considering decisions that may affect workplace health and safety. Employers must also consult with their workers on which consultation methods they would prefer.

Why should consultation with young workers be different?

A young worker's life is likely to be quite different to yours. They may have different priorities or enjoy different activities. Young workers do not have the same experience as an adult member of your team and may be more reluctant to speak-up than adult employees. These differences illustrate the need to create the best possible environment for communication and mutual understanding.

Is there anything else I need to consider?

You should also note that young workers will not always assess risk the way that you would. Remember, there is no such thing as *common sense* without first having common experience. Young workers are not likely to have a range of experience to draw upon.

Some tips for maximising the effectiveness of your consultations with young workers:

- Keep text to a minimum, break the information / questions down to key points.
- Ask questions to check understanding.
- Ensure the language, both written and spoken, is appropriate for the young people you are consulting, remember that many young people do not enjoy reading and writing.
- Avoid unnecessary formality when consulting with young workers.
- Young people need to see that their contributions will affect the decision making process and make a difference. However, be careful not to create unrealistic expectations of changes that may result from the consultation.
- It's usually best to ask participants what time and place they would prefer the consultation be held.
- Involve the young people as much as possible. Make the process more enjoyable, and young people will be more willing to join in.

Go to '*If you want to know what we think, just ask us!*' for more information.