

Job safety for older workers

As an older worker, you may be less likely to be injured in a job-related accident. Often, age comes with experience, focus and attention to detail. At 63, you may be a more precise worker than you were at 23.

However, you may face other risks, studies show. When accidents do happen, older workers are more likely to be severely injured and to require more time off work to recover. Further, chronic and repetitive injuries may be more likely to occur as bodies age.

These issues are growing in the U.S. as the workforce ages. Because the population of the U.S. is aging, and workers are delaying retirement, the population of the workforce is growing older. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that in 2015, one in five workers will be older than 65. By 2020, one in four workers will be older than 55.

Because of this shift, interest is growing in ways to keep older workers safe on the job. According to a blog published by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, workers and employers can take a number of steps, including:

- Making workplace flexibility a priority. Workers should have a say in their schedules, organization, location and tasks.
- Use self-paced work and less repetitive tasks.
- Create work environments that are ergonomically friendly.
- Reduce hazards such as noise and slip and trip hazards, which are especially dangerous for older workers
- Require supervisors to have training in managing an aging workforce
- Prepare accommodations and a return-to-work process after illness or injuries

Injuries can happen even when safety precautions are taken. An experienced workers' compensation attorney can advise and represent you in a claim for benefits.

For more about safety issues faced by older workers, see our recent article.