



I had the privilege of taking several students to the monthly Safety Meeting at the Building Trades Employers' Association last month. As we all sat there listening to a litany of safety incidents that led to injury, dismemberment or death, it was clear that the simple act of being mindful and aware of basic safety protocols would have prevented most of these incidents from happening.

Workers cannot simply be told to think safety; it is something that needs to be inculcated in their minds not only as a way of thinking but also practiced on a regular basis. Providing young people with OSHA training is an essential first step in this process. There is no price tag on ensuring the safety of our students and workforce.

—Steven Wynn, assistant principal of the CTE Department, High School for Construction Trades, Engineering and Architecture, Ozone Park, New York City

Incorporating the OSHA 10 into your program will increase your students' employability, giving them a competitive advantage in the job market as well as providing them with information that will keep them safe on the job. The change in student behavior and awareness is quite visible when you walk into the shops. All of the students have their safety glasses on. Students are well aware of the hazards associated with their trade through OSHA training, and the safety quiz is the first thing students take in the shops. Students exhibit what they have learned! As an administrator, I want to have many certified instructors teaching the program to the students, and that works best when it's incorporated directly into the curriculum of the shops.



—Daniel R. Mello, principal, A.I. Prince Technical High School, Hartford, Conn.

OUR MISSION

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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OSHA Outreach Program:
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT
COLLABORATION



For more than seven years, the AFT and members in three large affiliates, in cooperation with their administrators and school districts, have launched an OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) Outreach Program for career and technical educators. These initiatives have supported AFT teachers in becoming OSHA-authorized outreach trainers who in turn can provide safety and health education to their students, ensuring that they are prepared to navigate the assorted hazards of work.

These teachers are committed to the safety and well-being of their students and are enthusiastic participants. They understand that teachers and school staff are uniquely positioned to advocate for students who are now working or may go on to work in highly hazardous industries.

The program offers two types of training—for construction trades and general industry (e.g., culinary, cosmetology, auto, technology, health services, etc.). The program provides students with basic and more advanced training about common safety and health hazards on the job. High school students in either group receive a minimum of 10 hours and up to 30 hours of invaluable information on their rights to a safe and healthy workplace, as well as effective methods for identifying and preventing exposure to common hazards in their program of study. Students receive an OSHA 10-hour or 30-hour course-completion card at the end of the training.

Benefits for Students

The program:

- Promotes safety awareness through participatory hands-on activities;
- Provides students with training tailored to the specific needs of their program of study;

- Includes outreach training content, such as hazard recognition and avoidance, workers' rights, employer responsibilities and how to file a complaint; and
- Offers students the opportunity to earn a nationally recognized course-completion card, which is beneficial for future employment.

In Connecticut, the State Vocational Federation of Teachers and its statewide district (Connecticut Technical Education and Career System) created a cooperative program that has prepared more than 100 career and technical educators to become OSHA-authorized trainers who in turn deliver training to their students. To date, more than 6,000 students have graduated with their OSHA 10 or 30 cards.

In New York City, the United Federation of Teachers—in collaboration with the state Department of Education's Career and Technical Education program—has implemented an accommodating platform, which has more than 51 career and technical education teachers who have achieved and maintained their OSHA-authorized trainer status in both the general and construction industry categories. In return, these educators have provided the OSHA 10- and 30-hour training and issued cards for approximately 6,000 of their students to date.

In Illinois, the Chicago Teachers Union has been implementing this program for its CTE teachers over the past three years. To Date, CTU and the AFT have trained more than 40 educators who in turn have been able to give much more in-depth, hands-on, in-class instruction than is provided in the online option available to students in the district.

Program Components

- The AFT would train career and technical education teachers over a two-week period in the summer, providing limited initial stipends.
- The school and/or district would agree to incorporate the OSHA 10-hour course into the curriculum and pay for OSHA 10 cards for students (currently \$8/student).
- The AFT would also support teachers with prepared curriculum, resources and access to a nationwide network of colleagues who are actively teaching the program.

Please contact 4healthandsafety@aft.org if you are interested in learning more about this capacity-building, union-sponsored program.



I decided to become an OSHA-authorized trainer because I am a CTE (career and technical education) teacher who teaches electrical installation, and I would like my students to understand the value of working safely. My students are exposed to electrical hazards and construction hazards from the moment they walk into my classroom. The value of becoming an OSHA-authorized trainer has brought a tremendous amount of knowledge to my classroom safety, health training and teaching. Students will actively identify hazards in the classroom or possible unsafe acts and will address them. Students understand their rights when working in their internships and will assert their rights if they believe they are being treated unfairly or working in unsafe conditions. Since I have started teaching OSHA, students have become more conscious of what happens in the classroom and also what they see out in the real world on construction sites. Students come to my classroom with pictures and stories of hazards that they saw and how OSHA should be aware of these situations.

—Ivana Nuñez, CTE electrical installation educator,
Queens Vocational and Technical High School, New York City



We have always emphasized safety as our top priority in all our trade careers in the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System, but we realized students needed a more in-depth understanding and awareness of not only safety but also of safe working conditions and their rights as an employee. The management at CTECS, the unions (the AFT and the State Vocational Federation of Teachers), and the collaboration of dedicated teachers were essential to the program's success. The program not only is successful, but also has thrived and allowed us to implement training across the state.

—Ray Mencio, education consultant,
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System