

SAFETY

Safety is goal number 1 for Train for Trades. Every participant interviewed for this toolkit, including staff and youth, discussed the issue of safety in some capacity. Safety precautions are extensive and include youth not being allowed in a unit by themselves or to deal with tenants directly to the policy and procedures connected to safety.

Safety is addressed in a few key ways:

Training

Choices For Youth/Train for Trades contracts with the Carpenters Millwrights College to provide basic safety training for the youth in a number of key areas including: Fall Protection, Standard First Aid, WHMIS, Powerline Hazards, Fire Extinguisher and Ramset gun training. This is about \$2,000/youth in certificates, which is also beneficial for youth who go on to pursue future training or careers in similar skilled trades industries.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

The provincial government's [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) dictates what employers must do to help keep their employees safe and to prevent illnesses and accidents on the job. This includes emergency signage, development of evacuation procedures, eye wash stations, fall protection, risk awareness and the development of other relevant occupational health and safety guidelines. Several staff and youth form the Occupational Health and Safety committee and receive additional training to support their participation.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All youth are trained in PPE standards. They must show up each and every day fully equipped (i.e. appropriate clothing, safety glasses, CSA approved work boots, hard hat). Failure to do so means that the youth is sent home and not paid for the day. Youth are supported to purchase their PPE upon entry into the program, which is helpful as they make the transition from unemployment or part-time (and often unrelated) work to full-time construction work. While PPE is a proper safety standard, youth and staff explained how safety requirements are much higher at Train for Trades than at other places they have worked.

“One [rule] is big...safety, we’re all about safety. That’s our main thing, we’re all about safety, safety, safety. You can’t go working without your protective equipment or anything like that; that just never happens, there is no go. There’s other companies out there I’ve been working for for years, they don’t even ask you to wear so much as a pair of safety glasses. Here, it’s mandatory which is wicked because it’s so dangerous. Even something as simple as having to wear steel-toe boots all the time. There’s companies out there you can just wear sneakers if you wanted to and you could break your feet, you could get something in your eye. Just a hard hat, just a simple thing like that.”

—Dylan, age 22, Tier 3 participant, Train for Trades



Dylan, a Tier 3, Train for Trades participant talks about Personal Protective Equipment.



Eddie St.Coeur from Choices for Youth, pictured with Tanya Gulliver and Steph Vasko of the Homeless Hub.

Certificate of Recognition™ (COR™) Certification

Train for Trades has had its Certificate of Recognition™ (COR™) accreditation from the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association (NLCSA) since 2010. Designed for the construction industry, COR™ is a health and safety certification. “The program is designed to assist companies in the development and maintenance of a company-wide health and safety management program. Firms receive accreditation upon completion of COR™ training, development and implementation of a company-wide safety program, a comprehensive hazard assessment, and internal and external safety reviews. Specifically, the COR™ Program helps construction companies understand OH&S legislation, and employer and worker rights and responsibilities. Understanding these rights and obligations can also help firms avoid liability and ensure due diligence” ([NLCSA COR™ website](#)).

COR™ status is required to bid on any provincial government contract and many other organizations (public and private sector) also require it, including the City of St. John’s, Newfoundland Labrador Housing Corporation, Memorial University, Eastern Health, Nalcor Energy and Newfoundland Power.

COR™ AND PRIME

The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission of Newfoundland Labrador has an employer incentive program called PRIME. The practice incentive component of this provides a 5% refund to recognize employers who have good OH&S practices. Completion of COR™ can help a construction industry employer meet their PRIME requirements

“Well safety is our big thing. We are all about safety. We want everyone to go home with what they came in with...fingers, toes. That's why I emphasize there's nothing about speed with us. When I built houses it was all about the faster you can get it done the more money that can be made. We don't emphasize that here. We want these young people to learn. We want to take the time to learn. There's nothing that comes first rather than safety. Safety is the main thing. It's what we do for sure. Learning comes after the safety piece too, and learning about safety obviously, and the way to do it properly. When I was in this industry no one was looking out for you. It wasn't a big emphasis on things you know. And these days I want young people to go out into this industry and know the proper ways to be safe so they can get through their work days in a safe matter.”

—Ronnie O'Neill, Site Manager, Train for Trades

HOMELESS HUB THOUGHTS:

Obviously, safety needs to be a critical component of any project working with vulnerable youth and particularly for a construction program. The focus that Choices for Youth puts on safety in its Train for Trades program, however, is exceptional.

Having COR™ status is useful in a couple of ways. From an organizational viewpoint it makes Train for Trades more viable as a company because it allows them to bid for a greater number of projects. They would not have their contract with Newfoundland Labrador Housing if it was not for their COR™ accreditation. It also proves to the youth the seriousness with which Train for Trades takes safety.

COR™ also makes up the bulk of Train for Trades' policies. Rather than having separate safety policies, youth at T4T are required to meet the mandates established by COR™. This means that they operate in a professional-level environment, which will help them transition to mainstream employment. For the youth, their knowledge of and experience with COR™ is something they can put on their resume to make them more marketable to future employers.