

## National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

**Zoe Carll**

*Gila Ridge High School*

Sometimes it can be difficult to be young. Although most adults scoff at the statement, there is a lot of stress that accompanies the unknown. High school is a place where youth are taught basic skills to become a quality college student. The class that by far has been the most impactful has been my welding course. On the surface it might seem intimidating to many, but welding has provided me the opportunity to grow in areas I would never have thought possible. One of those areas of growth was in safety and general workplace awareness.

The OSHA 10 card was a requirement for all vocational welders in the program. Welding labs are fraught with danger. Welding labs have sharp edges, metal, heat, and cutting tools everywhere that could cause major injuries. The OSHA 10 curriculum highlighted the importance of workplace safety and situational awareness.

Situational awareness is an important part of the OSHA 10 training. It is easy to get caught up in conversation and lose track of people and objects. The training helped identify common hazards and situations that people have commonly been injured in. I have witnessed situations in the welding shop that were identified in the OSHA 10 training. Because of the training, I was quickly able to identify the hazards and make recommendations to prevent injury. The training changed the way I look at safety in the shop.

Another important part of the OSHA 10 training is the emphasis on proper personal protective equipment (PPE). I completed the general industry OSHA 10 which included general guidelines for several industries. Eye protection is a universal safety priority that must always be worn. Anytime people are in shops, laboratories, construction zones or other areas with any potential for eye injury, safety glasses must be worn. Proper footwear is also a general industry standard that must always be followed. I changed the way I dress for school on lab days to better protect myself against workshop dangers. Additionally, I invested in steel toed work boots to ensure my feet survive should a hot torch drop or molten spark land on my shoe.

I intend on going to college to continue my education. Although I am not sure if I will be able to continue to weld, I will take the OSHA 10 information with me. The general industry card has prepared me for almost any general industry environment I could be in. The tips to keep myself safe as well as understanding industry expectations give me an advantage in life.

I understand what the general industry dangers are, and how to protect myself in those environments. Additionally, I have a certification that is nationally recognized, that provides an advantage over those who have never completed the course. One of the very best things my welding teacher did to ensure my safety and success was implement the OSHA 10 training in class.

Knowledge is power, and I empowered knowing I have the basic skills to maintain safety in the workplace. I hope other students continue to complete the OSHA 10 training and take the important information with them throughout their adult lives. Although many teenagers do not know where life will lead, I know I am prepared and capable of keeping myself and my co-workers safe in a general industry environment.