

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

Joseph Rechsteiner

Grand Blanc High School / Kettering University

As a recently graduated senior, I have been working in the construction field with my father. The OSHA 10-Hour General Industry wallet card that I received from my woodworking class in high school has helped me recognize potential hazards in the workplace and has allowed me to inform my fellow co-workers of safety practices that are vital to the job. For example, hardhats are worn everywhere on the site as protection from falling debris or machine impact that could cause injury or death. The OSHA10 General Industry course has given me a step ahead by providing the knowledge needed to stay safe on the job and has aided me in performing tasks more efficiently because of this knowledge.

In addition, there are weekly OSHA construction safety checks done by the project manager that refresh our safety "IQ's". I feel safe at work knowing that everyone is following OSHA regulations and that my co-workers are actively conscious of the possible hazards.

In October, I will begin working at the engineering firm, Jabil Circuit, in Auburn Hills, Michigan. This is a co-op job through Kettering University, and in any engineering career, safety is a top priority. I will be a mechanical engineer at the company; therefore, machines and tools will be a big part of my work. With machines and tools come potential hazards. Because I am OSHA10 General Industry certified, I feel as though it helped me get this job because I have safety experience that others may not. The information from the safety course will assist me in my everyday work routine and will help me stay safe in the future as I continue to work at the company.

I believe OSHA should be a required course for high school students because no matter what career they pursue, practicing safety will be necessary to promote a properly functioning workplace. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "About 2.8 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses were reported by private industry employers in 2017, occurring at a rate of 2.8 cases per 100 full-time workers".

If we inform our youth of the safety procedures and potential hazards now, the number of injuries and illnesses should be greatly decreased. The OSHA10-Hour General Industry wallet card is more than a piece of paper. The card is a key to success for workers of any age and any career and can help the world become a safer place.