

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

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As a high school student, I am very grateful that I was able to take the OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Course because it has become very useful in my engineering classes. I am currently taking Robotics and a class called Rockets. As a Junior, this is my third year in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program. I completed the OSHA course in my very first high school engineering class, so I have been fortunate to use and apply the skills for two years.

Like many students, I was very skeptical about the ten-hour course when it was first introduced. I thought I knew a lot about safety and hazards because I live in a family of engineers. However, I was wrong, and the course turned out to be the most rewarding ten hours I have ever spent! I learned how to identify, avoid and prevent hazards in the workplace and my everyday life. This knowledge has greatly benefited me in my engineering courses because I now understand the importance of personal protective equipment and keeping our walking-working surfaces clean.

While I was completing the OSHA course, we started to design and build a robot for the new VEX game in my Robotics class. These robots are made from aluminum so there is a lot of cutting involved. Before we started to formulate ideas, my teacher went through a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation and demonstration of how to safely use every piece of equipment in our shop, such as drill presses, bandsaws, and others. In addition to learning how to use these tools, we were instructed what protective equipment we should use with each one in order to stay safe. After all the safety precautions were outlined, we went to work on our first robot. I focused on staying safe and used goggles when cutting metal due to what I learned from OSHA-10. It is crucial to wear goggles because metal shavings can fly up and possibly hit you in the eye. Using appropriate protective equipment will prevent serious injuries. The OSHA course has taught me to stay safe in the workplace by wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment.

The walking-working surfaces module in the course has also been one of the most important lessons that I can apply in my everyday life. In my Rockets class, we have already designed and launched three rockets. Throughout the process, I have noticed a few issues that I was able to resolve thanks to the OSHA course. When we are building our rocket, it can get a little chaotic because there are about 8 groups in my class building 8 rockets. If boxes of supplies were left on the ground along with low hanging extension cords, then accidents could result. I learned through the course that all walkways should be clear of potential hazards and if there are boxes on the ground, they should be placed out of the walkway in a safe area. These precautionary measures lead to a safer working area and therefore yield fewer injuries.

Completing the OSHA course has been very rewarding in many ways. It allows me to stand out compared to other students and job applicants due to the fact that I know how to safely work in an environment with many potential hazards. I am also now able to help my fellow classmates or coworkers learn how to stay safe and prevent injuries. It is truly amazing how much more successful a company or group can be when everyone is following precautionary measures and doing all they can to avoid hazards. This not only contributes to increased efficiency but also the overall safety of the environment.

The OSHA-10 General Industry card will continue to be a huge benefit in the future in so many ways. While I haven't decided on my exact career path yet, I would like to focus on the engineering field. The importance of safety will be vital in my success because a company cannot perform to its highest potential if safety is compromised. The OSHA-10 card in my wallet acts as a constant reminder of my duty and responsibility to stay safe and help others in the case of an emergency or accident. The OSHA course has taught me the fundamental knowledge of the importance of hazard identification, prevention and how to avoid these potential hazards which will greatly contribute to future success.

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