

Cascade Aerospace



Young worker safety flies first-class

To keep young workers soaring safely in their careers, Cascade Aerospace uses a mix of structured learning and steady integration.

To the untrained eye, the company's Abbotsford facility – responsible for aircraft maintenance, overhaul, and repair – is a maze of ladders, heavy machinery and large jets. For young workers whose first out-of-school job is with the company, they receive the training to safely navigate the beginning of their careers.

“Young workers’ inexperience and enthusiasm is the exact reason that the training is effective,” says Marketing Director Lorna Thomassen, “The new worker wants to make sure they do well in their new employment environment and typically have, or are willing, to adopt safe philosophies and habits.”

Young workers begin at Cascade Aerospace with a week of training sessions. Combining classroom-style learning with hands-on instruction, young workers spend a large part of their time on topics related to health and safety. For example, they will learn how to properly wear and use safety equipment.

Because they will be working with many different and potentially dangerous chemicals, young workers spend a great deal of time learning about material safety data sheets. These one-page documents outline how to work safely with a chemical product and identify potential hazards.

Material safety data sheets cover product-specific topics such as:

- what are the first aid procedures
- how the chemical may react when in contact with something else
- what protective equipment to wear

After their week of training, young workers receive a workplace orientation. Here, they learn about the different parts of the individual aircrafts and how each system works and integrates with everything else.

They are then paired with an experienced co-worker who will mentor them for a period of weeks or months – depending on the young worker's progress and comfort level. Cascade Aerospace also documents the development of each young worker through a series of evaluations and progress reports.

With a mentor and their immediate team members, young workers are smoothly integrated into the workplace with the idea that the more comfortable people are, the more likely they will ask questions. The company's program ensures not only do young workers have someone who is assigned to look after their well-being and development, but they can also rely on their peers for support.

“We highly value the health and safety of each and every employee and want to do everything possible to avoid the pain and suffering an employee and their families could experience through a workplace accident,” says Thomassen.

“Young worker safety is the most important investment employers can make: the returns are life-long.”