Young & New: Managing the Risk of Early-Career Workers Picture This

In the image, the young worker is struggling to control a loaded pallet jack,

and the tilted boxes show he’s moving the load unsafely. He looks unsure and overwhelmed, clearly lacking proper training or confidence with equipment that can cause serious injuries. Meanwhile, the experienced worker beside him is distracted with paperwork instead of supervising or correcting the unsafe technique. This lack of guidance leaves early-career workers vulnerable to mistakes, strains, and struck-by incidents.

New and young workers should receive close, hands-on coaching during their first months, especially when using material-handling equipment. Supervisors must stay engaged, provide real-time correction, and ensure loads are stable, paths are clear, and proper techniques are understood. Pairing new workers with trained mentors improves awareness, confidence, and safe habits. Strong, proactive supervision is essential to reduce early-career risks and help new workers develop safe routines from the start.