

Safe Jobs for Youth Month Resource Kit

Sample Article for Employers

It's that time of year again. Teenagers are out looking for work. As an employer, you can offer them a great work experience while also protecting them from injury on the job. Many teens are not so lucky. Every six minutes, somewhere in the U.S., a teenager is injured seriously enough on the job to go to the hospital or emergency room. Seventy teens die from work injuries each year.

Governor Schwarzenegger has declared May as "Safe Jobs for Youth Month" to remind parents, teens, and employers that they must pay special attention to the safety of teens entering the workforce. Employers play a key role in preventing injuries and creating safe jobs for teens. The California Partnership for Young Worker Health and Safety, representing government agencies, parent groups, teachers, employers, and others, is calling on employers to educate themselves and their teen workers on the importance of teen safety at work.

Preventing Teen Worker Injuries - What Employers Need to Know

Teens get hurt when:

they take on jobs for which they're not trained

they don't have appropriate supervision, or

they work with dangerous equipment.

High hazard jobs for youth include handling cash late at night in stores or fast food operations, especially when alone; working around hot oil or grease in restaurants; or working at heights in construction jobs. Driving is one of the leading causes of job injury and death among 16- and 17-year old workers, even though federal law prohibits driving as an occupation for those under 18. Selling candy and other consumer goods door-to-door and on the street is also hazardous to youth, with increased risk of motor vehicle injury and vulnerability to assaults and abductions.



"Most teens are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They make my work a lot of fun. But teens can be injured on the job when they don't receive adequate safety training and supervision."

—Operations Manager, Oakland Zoo

How Employers Can Help

Some things employers should keep in mind when hiring teens are:

Know the law and check your compliance. California labor laws prohibit teens from working late and/or long hours, and from doing especially dangerous work. Make sure teen employees are not assigned work schedules that violate the law, or given prohibited job tasks like operating heavy equipment or using power tools.

Also, Cal/OSHA's workplace safety and health regulations help protect all of your employees, including teens. You have a legal obligation to keep your workplace safe.

Stress safety to frontline supervisors. Frontline supervisors are in the best position to influence teen attitudes and work habits. Encourage them to set a good example.

Train teens to put safety first. Make sure they get clear instructions for each task, especially unfamiliar ones. Show them what safety precautions to take. Provide hands-on training. And be sure to encourage teens to let you know if there is a problem or if directions are unclear.

Provide adequate supervision. Avoid having teens work alone. Observe them while at work, and correct any mistakes.

The California Resource Network for Young Worker Health and Safety, which is administered by U.C. Berkeley's Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP), has a factsheet available, called *Facts for Employers: Safer Jobs for Teens*. To get copies, call the Young Worker Resource Line at 1-888-933-TEEN or download it from our website at www.youngworkers.org. The factsheet summarizes key safety and labor law information for employers who hire teens. For technical assistance with a child labor question, phone the Resource Line. We are a non-regulatory organization that's here to help you.

“Jobs can be a great way to gain valuable experience, not to mention income. But they need to be safe jobs,” says Diane Bush, Coordinator of the Resource Network. “We need to make sure teen workers get enough training and are placed in jobs appropriate for their age. Safe Jobs for Youth Month can help ensure that summer jobs are a great experience for youth *and* for their employers.”



The California Labor Code and Teen Workers

California's Labor Code prohibits workers under the age of 18 from doing certain kinds of hazardous work. It also sets the hours that teens may work, both during the school year and during the summer. Key restrictions for workers under age 18 are listed below. This list is not complete, but covers the most common and important restrictions.

In California no worker under 18 may:

- Drive a motor vehicle on public streets as part of the job, or work as an outside helper on a motor vehicle.
- Operate power-driven machinery, including meat slicers, box crushers, forklifts, and circular saws.
- Handle, serve, or sell alcoholic beverages.
- Work in wrecking, demolition, or roofing.

Also, no one under 16 may:

- Work in building or construction.
- Work in manufacturing or food processing.
- Do baking or cooking on the job (except at a serving counter).
- Work on a ladder or scaffold.
- Load or unload trucks.
- Dispense gas or oil.
- Clean, wash, or polish cars.

Work Hours for Teens

Work Hours: Ages 14 and 15

- 7 am–7 pm, from Labor Day–June 1
- Not during school hours
- 7 am–9 pm, from June 1–Labor Day

Maximum Hours When School Is in Session: 18 hours a week, but not over:

- 3 hours a day on school days
- 8 hours a day Saturday–Sunday and holidays

Maximum Hours When School Is not in Session

- 40 hours a week
- 8 hours a day

Work Hours: Ages 16 and 17

- 5 am–10 pm when there is school the next day
- 5 am–12:30 am when there is no school the next day

Maximum Hours When School Is in Session: 48 hours a week, but not over:

- 4 hours a day Monday–Thursday
- 8 hours a day Friday–Sunday and holidays

Maximum Hours When School Is not in Session

- 48 hours a week
- 8 hours a day

Work Permits

With certain exceptions, youth under 18 who take a job must have a work permit issued by the school district. Applications are available from their school site or from the main district office. Work permits are not required for youth who have graduated from high school or have passed the high school equivalency exam.

—Developed by the California Resource Network for Young Worker Health and Safety

Compliance Checklist for Employers

This checklist can help you determine whether you are in compliance with the most important California child labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations. The list is not complete, and is not intended as legal advice. Other sections of this factsheet give more information on the issues covered here.

Labor Laws

- Employees under 18 *do not* work too many hours, too late, or too early.
- Employees under 18 *do not* do any hazardous work prohibited by child labor laws.
- Employees under 16 *do not* do any of the tasks prohibited for their age group.
- All employees under 18 have valid work permits which were issued by their school district office (or other agencies designated by the district). (Not required for those who have graduated from high school or passed the equivalency exam.)
- All employees (including teens) are covered by workers' compensation.
- Employees (including teens) receive the minimum wage—\$6.75. In some cases, employers can pay less than minimum wage during the first 160 hours of work, if the worker has no previous similar experience. For more information, ☎ (888) 275-9243.



Cal/OSHA Regulations

- There is an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) for your workplace. (If you have more than 10 employees, you must have a written program.)
The program includes:
 - Information and training for all workers about possible hazards, given in a language they understand.
 - A system for workers to report hazards without fear of being fired or punished.
 - A system for inspecting the workplace and correcting hazards promptly.
 - Training for supervisors.
- You meet the key requirements of the Hazard Communication standard:
 - All containers of toxic materials are labeled with the chemical name, hazard warnings, and name and address of the manufacturer.
 - Employees are trained about chemicals they work with, potential hazards, and protective measures.
 - Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for all chemicals in your worksite are easily accessible to workers.
- You provide all safety and protective equipment that employees need.

NOTE: Cal/OSHA also has many specific regulations covering electrical hazards, fire safety, fall protection, machinery, etc. See **Resources for Information and Help** in this factsheet.