

Tips for Parents of Working Teens



Why should parents be involved?

Millions of teens work to earn money, learn new skills, and prepare for the adult world. But, each year about 80,000 teens under age 18 are hurt on the job. Although some jobs may seem more risky than others, your teen can get hurt on any job. Long working hours, lack of supervision and job hazards can harm your child's health and school experience.

Why are teens hurt on the job?

- » When teens are new on the job, they are more likely to get injured.
- » Teens are less likely to speak up or ask questions about working conditions.
- » All jobs can have hazards, ranging from wet floors to sharp objects to heavy lifting.
- » Teens may not get the training they need to do the job safely.

What can parents do?

Know the laws.

- » **California labor law** says teens cannot work too late or too long, or do very dangerous work.
- » **Cal/OSHA's workplace safety and health laws** require that the workplace be safe and that workers receive health and safety training on the tasks they do.
- » **Find out more about** child labor and health and safety laws at <http://www.youngworkers.org> or download *Are You a Working Teen?*

Make sure your teen has a work permit.

In California, even during the summer, workers under 18 years old must have a permit to work for each new job (unless they have already graduated). Students apply for work permits at their school or school district office.

Watch for warning signs.

- » **Unhappy at work:** Does your teen seem unhappy with work? Teens can find it hard to talk about issues like sexual harassment or workplace stress.
- » **Being tired:** Is your teen always tired? Does he or she complain about not getting enough rest?
- » **Losing interest:** Has your teen lost interest in school, outside activities, or no longer has time for family or friends?
- » **Getting hurt on the job:** Have your teen or other workers been injured at that job? To learn about benefits if a teen is hurt on the job, contact a California's Workers' Compensation Information and Assistance Officer at (800) 736-7401 or go to www.dir.ca.gov/DWC.



Talk to your teen about work.

- » **What tasks does your teen do?** For example, is he or she asked to do heavy lifting? Work alone for long periods?
- » **Was your teen trained for the job?** If your teen is asked to perform a new task, he or she should be trained before doing it.
- » **Are there any workplace hazards?** Ask your teen's opinion of the workplace. Are there slippery floors, locked or blocked exit doors, crowded work spaces, or machines without safety guards?
- » **Is the supervisor present?** Find out if the supervisor shows concern towards the workers and encourages questions.

Set limits on work hours.

If your teen is tired or is having trouble keeping up with school-work, he or she may be working too many hours. Help your teen reduce his or her work hours.

Help resolve work problems.

If your teen has concerns about hours or safety at work, help him or her think about what change is needed and why, whose help he or she might need, and how to approach the supervisor.

Where can parents find out more?

UC Berkeley's Labor Occupational Health Program has fact sheets for teens and employers as well as other resources. To learn more check out our website at www.youngworkers.org.



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