

Teen Fatality Response Kit: For Employers

On May 12, 2021, Omar went to his afterschool job at a small tire shop where he'd been working part time since the previous summer. He worked there with another friend of his from high school—both were juniors. The shop only had 5 employees including the two students. Omar had a lot going for himself: he was a member of Future Farmers of America (FFA), was on the school's varsity soccer team, and had taken several automotive classes at school. He was a role model for his three young brothers and seemed to always have a smile for everyone.



Just before closing, someone came in with a flat tire. The teens agreed to change the flat tire and jacked up the car on one side with a hydraulic jack. The owner of the car also asked for an oil change, which this small business didn't typically offer. The teens knew how to do an oil change, so Omar jacked up the other side of the car to change the oil. When he was under the car, it shifted and fell off one of the jacks and crushed him. His friend had to get him out from under the vehicle. Omar died shortly after. Only one adult was at the shop, and wasn't where they were working.

The community was devastated—Omar's family, friends, and his employer and workmates.

There are many safeguards that should have protected Omar but didn't:

1. Omar should have had a work permit but didn't. Did he or his employer know that was required? The permit would have stated Omar couldn't work with hydraulic lifts.
2. California's child labor law prohibits workers under 18 from doing work that involves hydraulic jacks. Did Omar or his employer know this?
3. Safety training in automotive classes and at work should cover safe use of jacks and blocking or cribbing, as well as what laws protect teens in the workplace. Did Omar and his co-worker's training cover this? If it did, what conditions led the teens to ignore this training, or forget its importance?

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If you are an employer:

- **Get** work permits for any workers under age 18. Workers under 18 must request a work permit application at their school or school district office before beginning a new job. This permit will clearly state what kind of work is prohibited for teen workers.
- **Know** and follow the law.
 - California's child labor laws ensure that teens are protected from doing the most hazardous job tasks or working with certain equipment.
 - California's health and safety laws require every workplace to have an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) that includes identifying and addressing hazards, training employees about hazards, and involving employees in the program.
- **Ensure** that minors only use equipment that is permitted under child labor laws; [clearly label equipment](#) that young workers are *not* allowed to use.
- **Train** ALL of your employees to work safely.
- **Provide** extra supervision and mentoring to young workers. Provide clear instructions, including what job tasks young workers should or should not do.
- **Encourage** young workers to ask questions and report any safety and health concerns.
- **Share** this information about what employers and teens should know with your family and friends—young people, parents, teachers and other employers.

Resources:

- [Facts for Employers—Safer Jobs for Teens \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Are You a Working Teen? \(Spanish\)](#)
- [A 16-year-old tire repair assistant died when a vehicle slipped off a hydraulic jack and fell on him while he was changing the oil](#) – CA Dept of Public Health fatality investigation report
- For links to all resources visit: youngworkers.org/safe-jobs-month/resource-kit/