

Teens: Know your Rights at Work



Did you know that teens are more likely to be injured at work?

Teens are often injured on the job due to unsafe equipment, stress, and the rushed pace of work. Also they may not receive adequate safety training and supervision.

Teens are much more likely to be injured when they work on jobs they are not allowed to do by law.

What is a hazard?

Something at work that can hurt you, make you sick or hurt your mental health.

Some examples by type of work include:



Janitor/Clean-Up

Toxic chemicals in cleaning products,
Blood on thrown out needles



Food Service:

Slippery floors, Hot cooking equipment, Sharp objects



Office

Stress, Harassment,
Poor work station design



Retail/Sales

Violent crimes,
Heavy lifting

The employer is *legally responsible* for creating a safe and healthy workplace!

What are my rights on the job?

By law, your employer **must** provide:

- A safe and healthy workplace
- Training on chemicals and other hazards
- Protective clothing and equipment (PPE)
- At least the CA minimum wage - set at \$16.00/hour as of 1/1/24
 - To check for the most up to date information, visit https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/faq_minimumwage.htm
- A 10 minute rest period after every 4 hours of work (paid). A 30 minute meal break after no more than 5 hours (unpaid)
- Workers' compensation benefits if you get hurt at work.
 - Medical care whether or not you miss time from work
 - Payments if you lose wages for more than 3 days
 - Other benefits if you become permanently disabled



You also have a **right** to:

- Report safety problems to Cal/OSHA
- Work without racial or sexual harassment
- Refuse to do work that could kill or badly hurt you
- Receive a pay statement
- Join or form a union



Be sure to point out problems to other workers and report hazards to your supervisor.

Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand something!

If you are under 18, in order to work, you need to get a work permit from your school or school district office. Unless you have graduated, you will then need a Certificate of Age (B1-1 with student information verified by school signature).

Is It OK to Do Any Kind of Work?

NO.

You must be **at least 14 years old for most jobs, except informal jobs like babysitting or yard work. Check with your school counselor for more information.*



In CA no worker **under 18** can:

- Drive a motor vehicle on public streets as a main part of the job (17-year olds can drive in a few specific cases)
- Drive a forklift or other heavy equipment
- Use powered equipment like a circular saw, box crusher, meat slicer or bakery machine
- Work in wrecking, demolition, excavation, or roofing
- Work in logging or a sawmill
- Prepare, serve, or sell alcoholic drinks
- Work anywhere where teens are exposed to radiation
- Work remotely online



Also, no one **14 or 15 years old** can:

- Do any baking
- Cook (exceptions include electric or gas grills not over an open flame and deep fat fryers that automatically lower and raise baskets)
- Work in dry cleaning or commercial laundry
- Do building construction or manufacturing work
- Load or unload trucks, railroad cars or moving belts
- Work on a ladder or scaffold



Because teens are encouraged to focus on school, there are *child labor laws* to protect teens from working too late or too long.

WORK HOURS FOR TEENS

Ages	14-15	16-17
Work Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 am–7 pm, from Labor Day–June 1 • Not during school hours • 7 am–9 pm, from June 1–Labor Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 am–10 pm when there is school the next day • 5 am–12:30 am when there is no school the next day
The most hours you can work when school is in session	18 hours a week, but not over: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hours a day on school days • 8 hours a day Saturday –Sunday and holidays 	48 hours a week, but not over: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 hours a day Monday–Thursday • 8 hours a day Friday–Sunday and holidays
The most hours you can work when school is not in session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 hours a week • 8 hours a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 hours a week • 8 hours a day

There are exceptions for teens in work experience programs



WORKERS' COMPENSATION



What If I Get Hurt on the Job?

- Tell your supervisor right away. If you're under 18, tell your parents or guardians too.
- Get emergency medical treatment if you need it.
- Your employer must give you a claim form. Fill it out and return it to your employer. This helps ensure that you receive workers' compensation benefits.

Did You Know? You can receive benefits:

- Even if you are under 18.
- Even if you are a temporary or part-time worker (in most cases).
- You receive benefits no matter who was at fault for your job injury.
- You don't have to be a legal resident of the U.S. to receive workers' compensation benefits.
- You can't sue your employer for a job injury (in most cases).

What If I Have a Safety Problem?

Talk to your supervisor, parents, teachers, job training counselor, or union (if any) about the problem. If you need help, contact one of these agencies.

For health and safety information and advice:

- **California Partnership for Young Worker Health and Safety.**
Materials available in English and Spanish.
www.youngworkers.org
- **UC Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program**
(510) 642-5507, www.lohp.org
- **UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program**
(310) 794-5964, <https://losh.ucla.edu/>

To make a health or safety complaint:

- **Cal/OSHA**
(800) 963-9424, www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH
- **OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health)**
(800) 321-OSHA, www.osha.gov

To make a complaint about wages or work hours:

- **Labor Commissioner's Office**
(415) 703-5300, www.dir.ca.gov/DLSE
- **US. Department of Labor**
(866) 487-9243, www.dol.gov/whd

To make a complaint about sexual harassment or discrimination:

- **California Fair Employment and Housing**
(800) 884-1684, www.dfeh.ca.gov
- **US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**
(800) 669-4000, www.eeoc.gov/youth

For information about benefits for injured workers:

- **California Workers' Compensation – Information and Assistance**
(800) 736-7401, www.dir.ca.gov/DWC

It is against the law for your employer to fire or punish you for reporting a workplace problem or injury, or for claiming workers compensation.



youngworkers.org



To learn more about your labor rights



This document was created with funding from the Teaching Occupational Safety and Health contract, California Department of Education.

This information in this factsheet reflects California labor laws. If you live in another state, consult your state's labor laws.