

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

Legal & Safety Information for Working Teens

Identify Workplace Hazards

Hazards are things that can hurt you, make you sick or harm your mental health (e.g., toxic chemicals in cleaning products, blood on discarded needles, slippery floors, hot cooking equipment, heavy boxes, harassment or violence).



Know Your Rights

Your employer is legally responsible for providing a safe workplace and paying you at least minimum wage. Wage theft is a crime. Report payment issues to the Department of Industrial Relations. You have a right to training, protective clothing and equipment, to be paid the minimum wage and to report safety problems to Cal/OSHA (the branch of state government in charge of worker safety).

Speak Up

Point out problems to other workers and report hazards to your supervisor. You can also talk to your parents, teachers, job training counselor or union about the problem. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand something or need help.

Teens are more likely to get injured at work.



SAFE
JOBS
NOW!

How old do I have to be to have a job?

You must be at least 14-years-old for most jobs, except for informal jobs like babysitting or yard work. If you are under 18, you need to get a **work permit** from your school or school district office. If you have already graduated or work for a public agency, you will need a Certificate of Age.

How much should I be paid?

You have a right to earn the minimum wage: **\$16.90/hour** in California in 2026 (some cities and counties have higher minimum wages). You can check for the most updated information at the California Labor Commissioner's Office. You also have the **right to receive a pay statement** that lists the amount you earned and the total hours you worked.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS *at work*



Can I take breaks?

You have a right to a *paid 10-minute rest period* after every 4 hours of work and an unpaid 30-minute meal break after 5 hours of work.

What work is illegal for teens?

- Teens are not allowed to work *in the most dangerous industries* (like demolition and roofing).
- In California, workers under 18 may only drive cars under limited conditions, cannot drive forklifts or use other heavy machinery or powered tools (like circular saws, box-crushers, or meat slicers).
- Teens are also not allowed to prepare, sell or serve alcohol.
- There are additional protections if you are 16 and under, for example teens of this age are not allowed to unload trucks.
- If a teen is part of a work experience program, there are fewer restrictions.



What if I get hurt on the job?

If you are hurt at work, **you are eligible to receive workers' compensation** benefits (medical care and payments if you have to miss work). This is available to all workers in California, including those who are under 18, who work part-time and/or are undocumented. You can receive benefits no matter who was at fault for your injury. If you get hurt at work, tell your supervisor right away. Your employer must give you a claim form to fill out and return.

Legal Work Hours for Teens in California

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

	<i>Ages 14-15</i>	<i>Ages 16-17</i>
<i>When school is in session:</i>	Allowed to work before or after school between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Allowed to work up to 18 hours per week, but no more than three hours per day on school days and no more than eight hours per day on Saturday, Sunday or holidays.	Allowed to work before or after school Monday through Thursday between 5 a.m. and 10 p.m. Allowed to work between 5 a.m. and 12:30 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays outside of school hours. Allowed to work up to 48 hours per week, but not over four hours per day on school days or eight hours per day on weekends or holidays.
<i>When school is not in session (June 1 to Labor Day):</i>	Allowed to work between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. Allowed to work up to 40 hours per week and up to eight hours per day.	Allowed to work up to 40 hours per week and up to eight hours per day.

There are some exceptions for teens in work experience programs.

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