

Employer Guide to Teen Worker Safety

Line of Business: General Liability, Public Official's Liability

Risk Control Strategy/Key Issues: To promote safe workplace for teen workers and avoid workplace injuries.

Suggested Policy Elements:

Fact: Workers with less than one year of experience account for almost one-third of occupational injuries every year.

1. Development of Policy

- Development of Management Statement
- Assignment of Responsibilities
- Assignment of Accountability
- Set Up a Safety and Health Program with Documentation
 - ✓ A strong well documented safety and health program involving every worker at your organization is your best defense against workplace injuries.
 - ✓ Work with supervisors and experienced workers to develop an injury and illness prevention program and to help identify and solve safety and health problems.

2. Documentation

- Employee Training Files should be developed and maintained.
- Any training should be documented and included in Employee Training Files.
- Any infractions or policy or other incidents should be documented in Employment Files along with notation of any remedial training and/or corrective action done.

Child Labor Law Compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

- Understand child labor laws and occupational safety and health regulations that apply to your operation. (See Attached: A Summary of the Fair Labor Standards Act for Child Labor)

Pre-task planning

- Assess and eliminate hazards for adolescent workers.
- Work redesign can prevent many injuries.
- Supervisors and co-workers can help compensate for inexperience by showing teen workers how to do the job correctly.
- What may be obvious to an adult or simple common sense to an experienced employee may not be so clear to a teen tackling a task for the first time.
- Time spent showing a teen worker the best way to handle a job will result in work done right and without harm to tools or injury to the teen.
- Training teen workers to work safely is a multi-step process.
- Give clear instructions and tell them what safety precautions to take.
- Ask teen workers to repeat your instructions.
- Give teen workers an opportunity to ask questions.
- Show teen workers how to perform the task.
- Then watch while they do it, correcting any mistakes.
- Ask if they have any additional questions.

- Continue to monitor their work closely.
- Once teen workers know what to do and have demonstrated that they can do the job right, check again later to be sure they are continuing to do the task correctly.
- Don't let them take shortcuts with safety.
- Be sure that supervisors and co-workers set a good example by following the appropriate rules as well.

Training

- Stress safety, particularly among first-line supervisors who have the greatest opportunity to influence teen workers and their work habits.
- Make sure that adolescent workers are appropriately trained and supervised to prevent injuries and hazardous exposures.

6. Personal Protective Equipment

- Teen workers may need to wear protective equipment such as safety shoes, hard hats, or gloves, depending on the nature of their work.
- Be sure that teen workers know when they need to wear protective gear, where to find it, how to use it, and how to care for it.
- Follow up consistently to ensure that this is done.
- In other cases, teen workers may simply need to know about safety features of equipment or facilities.
- For example, they may need to be aware that they must keep exit doors free from clutter, assure that safety guards remain on machinery or that equipment is turned off or disconnected at the end of each shift.

7. Emergency Preparation

- Every worker needs to be ready to handle an emergency.
- Prepare teen workers to escape a fire, handle potentially violent customers, deal with power outages or face any other risks that affect your business.
- Teen workers need to know who to go to if an injury should occur and they need first aid or medical care.

Web Links:

- Occupational Safety & Health Administration
<http://www.osha.gov/>

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A Summary of the Fair Labor Standards Act for Child Labor

The FLSA child labor provisions are designed to protect minors by restricting the types of jobs and the number of hours they may work. Many hazardous activities are limited or prohibited by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The Fair Labor Standards Act limits the hours minors under 16 can work and prohibits employing minors under age 18 for certain hazardous occupations.

Prohibited jobs

Seventeen hazardous non-farm jobs, as determined by the Secretary of Labor, are out of bounds for teen workers below the age of 18. Generally, they may not work at jobs that involve:

1. Manufacturing or storing explosives
2. Driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor vehicle
3. Coal mining
4. Logging and sawmilling
5. Power-driven wood-working machines*
6. Exposure to radioactive substances and to ionizing radiations
7. Power-driven hoisting equipment
8. Power-driven metal-forming, punching, and shearing machines*
9. Mining, other than coal mining
10. Meat packing or processing (including power-driven meat slicing machines)
11. Power-driven bakery machines
12. Power-driven paper-products machines*
13. Manufacturing brick, tile, and related products
14. Power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears*
15. Wrecking, demolition, and ship-breaking operations
16. Roofing operations*
17. Excavation operations*

** Limited exemptions are provided for apprentices and student-learners under specified standards.*

Hours limitations

1. Youths 18 or older may perform any job, whether hazardous or not, for unlimited hours, in accordance with minimum wage and overtime requirements.
2. Youths 16 and 17 years old may perform any non-hazardous job, for unlimited hours.
3. Youths 14 and 15 years old may work outside school hours in various non-manufacturing, non-mining, non-hazardous jobs up to
 - 3 hours on a school day
 - 18 hours in a school week
 - 8 hours on a non-school day
 - 40 hours on a non-school week

Also, work must be performed between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., except from June 1 through Labor Day, when evening hours are extended to 9 p.m. For answers to your questions about child labor, call your local Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor