

Want A Good Job? Make It A Safe One

Every 30 seconds, an American teen worker is injured on the job, and one teen dies from a workplace injury every five days. According to the 2003 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, there were 138 fatalities among workers under the age of twenty four.

Each year the National Consumers League (NCL) compiles the five worst teen jobs each year using government statistics and reports, result from the Child Labor Coalition's annual survey of state labor departments, and news accounts of injuries and deaths. Statistics and examples of injuries for each job on the list are detailed in a report available at www.nclnet.org/childlabor.

According to NCL, the five worst jobs are:

•**Agriculture:** Agriculture is the most dangerous industry for young workers. Among young agricultural workers age 15-17, the risk of a fatal injury is four times the risk for young workers in other workplaces.



•**Working Alone and Late-Night Work in Retail:** The second highest number of workplace fatalities among youth are in the restaurant and retail store industries. Most deaths are robbery-related homicides.

•**Construction and Work at Heights:** Construction is the third leading cause of death among young workers. Death and serious injury result from working at heights six feet and above. Falls from roofs, ladders and scaffolds or staging are the most common types of fatal falls.

•**Driver/Operator of Forklifts and Tractors:** This includes minors who are operating or riding as passengers or non-operators working near such a machine. Tractor-related accidents are the most prevalent cause of agricultural fatalities in the US.

•**Traveling Youth Crews:** Defined as youth who are recruited to sell candy, magazine subscriptions, and other items door-to-door or on street corners, these youth operate under dangerous conditions and are unsupervised by adults.



You have the right to:

- a safe workplace
- refuse dangerous work and to file a complaint if your job is unsafe
- safety clothing, equipment, and training
- payment for your work
- medical care if you get injured or sick because of your job
- work without racial or sexual harassment

If your rights are in question, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides advice on what you can do at www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/rights.html



Speak up!

If you notice a safety hazard at work, report it to your supervisor or boss. If they don't address your concerns, file a complaint with OSHA. Please remember, it is illegal for your employer to punish you or fire you for reporting a workplace problem.

What you should know about *Teen Safety:*

Page 2 – Basic Rights for Teens ... about the laws that protect you

Page 2 – Protecting Yourself on The Job ... what you need to know

Page 3 – Resources for Teen Safety ... Federal and state agency contact info

Page 3 – Understanding Child Labor Laws ... prohibited occupations for teens



Basic Rights

By law, you have **basic rights**, including:

1. The right to a safe and healthful workplace.
2. The right to know about hazard in the workplace and what to do to prevent injuries from those hazards.
3. The right to report a hazard to their supervisor. If the employer refuses to address the hazard, the employee has a right to file a complaint with OSHA, no matter what their age.
4. The right to refuse work that they believe, in good faith, can be dangerous to yourself or others.



Basic Responsibilities

You also have **responsibilities**, including:

1. **Work safely:** you must use all machinery and equipment in the way you were trained. If it is a prohibited activity, you may not operate it at all.
2. **Report hazards:** if you know OSHA's laws are not being followed, or you suspect a hazard, it's your responsibility to speak up.
3. **Use appropriate protective equipment:** While Child Labor laws do prohibit teens from working in hazardous industries, there are times when you will be required to use personal protective equipment. Wear your safety gear – it's the law!

Protect Yourself On The Job

Know the Legal Limits – To protect young workers like you, state and federal laws limit the hours you can work and the kinds of work you can do. Contact the Oklahoma Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Labor, or check out www.dol.gov or www.okdol.state.ok.us, for more information.

Play it Safe - Always follow safety training. Working safely and carefully may slow you down, but ignoring safe work procedures is a fast track to injury. There are hazards in every workplace—recognizing and dealing with them correctly may save your life. If you have questions about workplace safety, go to www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html.

Ask Questions – Ask for workplace training— like how to deal with irate customers or how to perform a new task or use a new machine. Tell your supervisor, parent, or other adult if you feel threatened, harassed, or endangered at work. You don't have to put up with it.

Make Sure the Job Fits – If you can only work certain days or hours, if you don't want to work alone, or if there are certain tasks you don't want to perform, make sure your employer understands and agrees before you accept the job.

Don't Flirt with Danger – Be aware of your environment at all times. It's easy to get careless after a while when your tasks have become predictable and routine. But remember, you're not indestructible. Don't develop the mindset that it can't happen to you. Injuries often occur when employees become over confident, or when employees are careless or just goofing off.

Trust Your Instincts – Following directions and having respect for supervisors are key to building a great work ethic. However, if someone asks you to do something that feels unsafe or makes you uncomfortable, don't do it. Many young workers are injured—or worse—doing work that their boss asked them to do.



No job is worth your life!

The Oklahoma State Department of Labor, Federal OSHA and the Oklahoma Safety Council recognize the importance of establishing a collaborative relationship to foster an awareness of safety and health among young workers in Oklahoma. This publication has been developed in cooperation with our partners to promote teen safety in the workplace.

Our partners on the Internet:



Learn more about workplace safety at OSHA's Teen Worker webpage – www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/



Learn more about workplace safety at Oklahoma Safety Council's webpage – www.oksafety.org



Information on child labor laws in Oklahoma are available on the "publications page" at ODOL's website – www.labor.ok.gov

Understanding Oklahoma's Child Labor Laws

14

Fourteen (14) years of age is the minimum age for work.

Work Permits

Issued by the school, 14 and 15 year-olds are required to get a work permit from their school before they begin work.

Hours of Work 14 and 15 year-olds may work:

From the Tuesday after Labor Day to May 31st

- ◆ 3 hours on a school day
- ◆ 8 hours on a non-school day;
- ◆ 18 hours in a school week
- ◆ between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

From June 1st to Labor Day

- ◆ 8 hours on a non-school day;
- ◆ 40 hours in a non-school week
- ◆ between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Break Periods

- ◆ 30 minutes for every 5 hours worked
- ◆ 1 hour for every 8 hours worked.

All minors (under the age of 16) are prohibited from working in the following occupations:

- Construction
- Cooking or baking
- Fryers or grills
- Hoisting devices
- Ladders or scaffolds
- Lawn mower or weed eater (*other than working for self*)
- Loading and unloading
- Manufacturing, mining or processing
- Motor vehicles or service as helpers on vehicles
- Power-driven machines or equipment
- Public messenger service
- Public utilities and communications
- Slicers and sharp knives
- Transportation of persons or property by rail, highway, air, water, pipeline or other means
- Warehousing or storage, and
- Any other occupation declared particularly hazardous by federal law, federal regulations or the Commissioner of Labor.

Jobs Teenagers Can Do Include: office and clerical work, cashiering, selling, modeling, artwork, work in advertising departments, window trimming and comparative shopping, pricing or tagging (by hand or machine), assembling orders, packing and shelving, bagging and carrying out customers orders, errands and delivery work **by foot, bicycle and public transportation only**, kitchen work, dispensing gasoline and oil, courtesy service on premises of gasoline service station, car cleaning, washing and polishing, cleaning fruits, vegetables and stocking goods, when performed in areas physically separate from areas where meat is prepared for sale and outside freezers or meat coolers.

Note: Federal Regulations may vary from state regulations. Go to www.youthrules.dol.gov for additional information on federal regulations.