

State Labor Department Kicks Off “Speak Out for Workplace Safety” Video Contest

Each year, thousands of Oklahoma teens will transition into summer jobs, part-time work, or internships to earn extra spending money, develop new skills, and network with others. Federal and state youth employment laws are in place to ensure that youth workers are protected in their working environments. This includes restrictions on the legal age to work, the work permit process, schedules, and permitted/prohibited occupations.

The opportunity to seek that first job can be very rewarding for students. Employers, schools officials, parents, and teens need to have a good understanding of workplace rights and job safety guidelines so that all young workers can have the best experience possible on the job.

National surveys reveal that each year in the United States, more than 200,000 minors who are under 18 are injured on the job. Of these figures, 77,000 cases are serious injuries requiring treatment in the hospital emergency room and 70 cases end up being fatal. Alarming, this equates to one teenager being killed on the job every five days.

In an effort to bring education, business & industry, and government together to promote teen worker safety, the Oklahoma Department of Labor, in partnership with Online Video Solutions, will kick off the state’s first-ever “Speak Out for Workplace Safety” video contest. Other sponsors/contributors include the Ponca City Chamber of Commerce and Pizza Hut of Ponca City and Blackwell / Chisholm Enterprises. The goal of this contest is to create awareness and allow teens to teach other teens about the laws designed to protect them while at work. The contest will begin Monday, February 6 and will end Friday, March 30.

Before going statewide, a pilot contest will be conducted in Ponca City and Newkirk. Diane Bull from Ponca City High School and Dana Pulley from Newkirk High School will be the sponsoring teachers encouraging their students to enter. The top three videos and their sponsoring teachers will be eligible for prizes. A social media campaign will be done to showcase the grand prize winning video throughout Oklahoma.

According to Labor Commissioner Mark Costello, “Our first-ever video contest will be a fun way for students to take an interest in workplace safety and create strong awareness in smaller communities throughout the state when it comes to Oklahoma’s youngest workforce. We want to make sure that everyone is working together to look out for their best interest while they are on the job.”

The Oklahoma Department of Labor is planning to have a proclamation issued for “Speak Out for Workplace Safety Week” to honor the winning videos and promote a campaign to keep young workers safe. This special dedication to Oklahoma’s youngest workers will take place at the Oklahoma State Capitol in May. For more information about the video contest, contact Liz McNeill, Communications Director at statewide toll free number 1-888-269-5353.