

Media Advisory

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Labor Commissioner to Present Award During “Speak Out for Workplace Safety Week”

Oklahoma City - Throughout the year, millions of U.S. teens across the country will be employed in restaurants, grocery stores, retail outlets, offices, amusement parks, and movie theaters. Oklahoma businesses employ thousands of teens a year in part-time and summer work. Such opportunities allow young workers to gain valuable job experience while earning money.

State and federal child labor laws are in place to protect teen workers against workplace abuse, unsafe working conditions, and hazardous jobs. These restrictions are in place so that young workers are able to enjoy the rewards and challenges of their first job.

According to OSHA, teen workers have the following basic rights:

- The right to a safe and healthful workplace.
- The right to know about hazards in the workplace and what to do to prevent injuries from those hazards.
- 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.
- The right to refuse work that they believe, in good faith, can be dangerous to themselves or others.

According to federal surveys, more than 200,000 teens under 18 are injured on the job. Of these figures, more than 77,000 are serious injuries requiring treatment. Sadly, 70 of these cases end up being fatal. This equates to one teenager being killed on the job every five (5) days.

“We have an obligation to keep our young workers safe in Oklahoma” stated Labor Commissioner Mark Costello. “A single teen worker injury or fatality is one too many when we are talking about teenagers under the age of 18 losing life or limb.”

Governor Mary Fallin proclaimed May 14 – 18, 2012 as “Speak Out for Workplace Safety Week” in Oklahoma. As part of the festivities, a special awards ceremony will take place at the Oklahoma State Capitol to launch this safety campaign and announce the winners of the “Speak Out for Workplace Safety” video contest in its pilot stage.

In addition to the safety campaign, the Oklahoma Department of Labor Child Labor Unit is available to facilitate free youth employment presentations and provide free child labor safety publications upon request. For more information, visit www.labor.ok.gov