

# YOUTH RULES FOR KIDS AT WORK

Each year, thousands of Minnesota teens work in part-time or summer jobs. Early work experiences can be rewarding for young workers – providing great opportunities to learn important job skills. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry wants to help you have a safe and rewarding work experience. Below are some rights and responsibilities teens need to know about in the workplace.



## YOUR SAFETY AND HEALTH ON THE JOB

You have a right to a safe and healthy workplace. Proper safety training is a key component to help avoid injuries on the job. A recent U.S. study reported that 26 percent of workers younger than **18** years of age worked at least part of the day without an adult supervisor and as many as one-third of them reported not having any health and safety training. In Minnesota, the most common occupations for injured teens each year are cooks, food preparation workers, nursing aides and laborers.

**TIP:** To avoid injury, ask for help when you need it or if you are unsure about any job-related tasks. Most importantly, make sure you have access and training about safety gear and first-aid equipment.

## WHERE DO MOST MINNESOTA TEENS WORK?

Teens are typically employed in fast food, retail, parks and recreation, amusement parks, or federal or state youth employment programs. In Minnesota, the majority of employed **14-** to **18-year-olds** work in lodging and food services (36 percent), retail (26 percent), and health care and social assistance (8 percent).

## WHAT HOURS CAN TEENS WORK?

If both federal and state laws apply to an employer, the more protective or stricter standard must be followed. The minimum age for most employment is **14**, unless a federal and state law exemption allows for a younger minimum age.

**FACT:** Teens working too late at night is the most common complaint state investigators hear each year.

Minors ages **14** and **15** may not work:

- before 7 a.m. or after 9 p.m. with the exception of a newspaper carrier;
- more than eight hours a day, except in agriculture;
- more than 40 hours a week, except in agriculture;
- on school days during school hours, without an employment certificate issued by the school district superintendent.

During the school year, large employers (sales of more than \$500,000 annually) are prohibited from letting minors younger than **16** work later than 7 p.m., work more than three hours a day and work more than 18 hours a week.

Small employers (sales of less than \$500,000 annually) may allow minors younger than **16** to work until 9 p.m.

High school students aged **16** and **17** may not work after 11 p.m. on an evening before a school day or before 5 a.m. on a school day.



# YOUTH RULES

FOR KIDS AT WORK

## PROHIBITED WORK

There are both federal and Minnesota child labor laws that restrict minors from working in certain hazardous jobs or conditions.

For example, teens younger than **18** may not be employed in or about construction or building projects.

Other prohibited work for minors younger than **18** includes driving passenger-carrying vehicles; operating, erecting or dismantling rides or machinery in an amusement park; or working with explosives or fireworks.

Minors younger than **16** may not work with machinery such as power-driven snowblowers and other lawn and garden equipment, meat slicers or bakery equipment. Other prohibited work for minors

younger than 16 includes working with laundry, rug cleaning or dry cleaning equipment; being in contact with a carwash on a mechanized conveyor line; or doing welding of any kind.

A homeowner can hire a **14**-year-old to mow his or her lawn (which is considered a home chore), but a company that hires individuals to do similar jobs may not hire a **14**-year-old to mow a lawn.

**EXEMPTIONS:** Although a minor younger than **14** may not be employed in most cases, there are exemptions, such as a newspaper carrier, actor, actress, model, agricultural field worker or youth sports official. Such exemptions require a permit from the Department of Labor and Industry's Labor Standards unit.

## MINIMUM WAGE

Employers cannot pay teens less than the minimum wage. Employees must be paid at least the current minimum wage rate, regardless of the method of compensation, for all hours worked, including training time.

**NO TIP CREDIT:** Minnesota does not allow for tips received by employees to be credited toward the payment of minimum wages.

<b>Large employer wage</b> \$9.00/hour on Aug. 1, 2015 \$9.50/hour on Aug. 1, 2016	Any enterprise with an annual gross dollar volume of sales made or business done of \$500,000 or more
<b>Small employer wage</b> \$7.25/hour on Aug. 1, 2015 \$7.75/hour on Aug. 1, 2016	Any enterprise with an annual gross volume of sales made or business done of less than \$500,000
<b>90-day training wage</b> \$7.25/hour on Aug. 1, 2015 \$7.75/hour on Aug. 1, 2016	May be paid to employees younger than 20 years of age for the first 90 consecutive days of employment
<b>Youth wage</b> \$7.25/hour on Aug. 1, 2015 \$7.75/hour on Aug. 1, 2016	Paid to employees younger than 18 years of age who are not covered by federal laws

## QUESTIONS?

Many of the things parents hear – and sometimes business owners hear – about labor laws are from relatives, friends or other workers' experiences, **not the actual statutes and rules.**

If you have questions about labor laws, contact Labor Standards at (651) 284-5070, 1-800-342-5354 or [dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us).

If you have questions about workplace safety or health, contact Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation at (651) 284-5060, 1-800-657-3776 or [osha.consultation@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.consultation@state.mn.us).