

# 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 **14- to 18-year-olds** work in lodging or 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 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 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 Labor Standards.

## 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, contact Labor Standards.

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

## 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.

**Large employer** – Any enterprise with annual gross revenues of \$500,000 (as of Jan. 1, 2024) \$10.85/hour

**Small employer** – Any enterprise with annual gross revenues of less than \$500,000 \$8.85/hour

**Training wage** – May be paid to employees aged 18 and 19 the first 90 consecutive days \$8.85/hour

**Youth wage** – May be paid to employees aged 17 or younger \$8.85/hour

## STATE AND FEDERAL CHILD LABOR LAWS

Employers are generally subject to both state child labor laws and the federal child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Certain Minnesota child labor laws are more protective than federal law and vice versa. Employers covered by both Minnesota child labor laws and the federal FLSA must follow the most protective provisions that apply to their employees. Visit [www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/child-labor](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/child-labor) for more information about federal child labor law.