

News Release



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OSHA Aligns with Wage and Hour Division to Remind Employers of Prohibition for Young Workers to Operate Forklifts

WASHINGTON, DC—Employers should note that most workers under the age of 18 are prohibited from operating forklifts, according to a new Safety and Health Information Bulletin issued today by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Wage and Hour Division. Federal regulations prohibit most workers in non-agricultural employment under the age of 18 from operating forklifts.

"Young people are more likely to be injured in the workplace due to their lack of experience and maturity," said OSHA Administrator John Henshaw. "This bulletin is one way to remind employers of the standards that are in place to protect working teens from being seriously injured or killed. Nearly 70 teens lose their lives in workplace accidents each year."

"The restrictions on youth employment are designed to provide young workers with safe and positive early work experiences," said Tammy D. McCutchen, administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. "Employers must understand and comply with these laws to prevent serious occupational injuries and fatalities among youth. The bulletin highlights the relevant restrictions on forklifts and provides employers with access to additional compliance information."

The new bulletin was developed jointly by OSHA and Wage and Hour to inform employers that the Fair Labor Standards Act prohibits workers under the age of 18 from operating forklifts for non-agricultural operations. The bulletin also reminds employers OSHA's Powered Industrial Truck standard requires that forklift operators who are 18 or older must be trained and certified as competent to operate forklifts.

The bulletin cites two recent fatal forklift accidents that occurred in warehouses in Georgia and Massachusetts. Both operators were under 18 years of age.

Additional information on federal child labor laws is available on the Internet at www.youthrules.dol.gov or through the department's toll-free number at 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243)

OSHA is dedicated to assuring worker safety and health. Safety and health add value to business, the workplace and life. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.

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