

Purpose

This program provides information for teens who work outside their homes and for parents and employers who are concerned about the safety of working teens.

Objectives

Teens and parents will be able to identify high-risk work environments. Teens will better understand their rights in the workplace and feel comfortable requesting safety-related information during a job interview. Parents will understand the challenges their teens face and will be prepared to provide support, direction and guidance. This will assist teens in making decisions and assuming responsibilities.

An estimated 80 percent of all teens work for pay at some time during their high school years. Highest employment is during the summer months.

Approximately 100,000 teens aged 15 to 17 visit emergency departments each year for work related injuries. The National Consumer League cautions teens to choose their employment wisely. They should steer clear of dangerous work that is prohibited for minors under 18 years of age and they should always be vigilant about safety in the workplace.

Many managers may not thoroughly understand child labor laws and the requirements for reporting injuries. Statistics indicate little attention is directed to these areas, and inspections are minimal leaving little incentive for managers to become more informed in or compliant with the laws. Statistics provided by the Secretary of Labor indicate that more than 50 percent of teen injuries occur while working in the retail sector. Parents of teens and schools should become more pro-active in this area to ensure teens are aware of the dangers involved in working in the retail sector.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) governs teens and the hours and environments in which they may work. This act is enforced by the Wage and Hour Division of the Employment Standards Administration within the Department of Labor. This law protects the educational opportunities of minors and prohibits their employment in jobs with unsafe conditions. A large number of deaths have been associated with jobs such as driving a motor vehicle and forklift operation. Based on these statistics the FLSA prohibits 16 and 17 year olds from performing these jobs. Other hazardous activities, such as working alone in retail businesses and cooking, are



typically permitted. A copy of these laws must be posted in the work establishment. If this is not the case, a copy can be found at local libraries.

Procedures

According to National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Publication 95-125, jobs that cause the most adolescent deaths or severe injury are:

- working around motor vehicles;
- operating tractors and heavy equipment;
- working near electrical hazards;
- working at jobs with high risk for homicide;
- working with fall hazards;
- cooking and working around cooking appliances;
- hazardous manual lifting;

Teens are allowed to work (in select establishments) at age 14. Exceptions to the minimum age are newspaper delivery and farm work. For most jobs, such as cashiering, retail sales, daycare and park work, a teen must be at least 16 years old. Still other jobs, such as driving a commercial vehicle, working in manufacturing environments, meat packing, logging, and sawmills, are reserved for workers at least 18 years old.

The work schedule of 14 or 15 year olds cannot exceed 48 hours per week or 8 hours per day. Before their sixteenth birthday, students are not allowed to work past midnight, or before 5:00 a.m. They cannot work past 10:00 p.m. on a night before school.

4. Asking questions before being hired in a high-risk area will promote worker safety.

True

False

5. Adults (parents and teachers) can support teens by:

- a. working together to improve the quality of their work experience
- b. expecting a positive attitude and pride in their work
- c. improving the quality of their relationship between work and academic training
- d. improving their future prospects

Answer Key

1. True
2. a and c
3. d
4. True
5. a, c and d

Resources

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI,DWC) Resource Center offers a workers' health and safety video and DVD library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit our web site at <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/safety/employers.html>.

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The Texas Department of Insurance,
Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI, DWC)
E-mail resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us
or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

Safety Violations Hotline
1-800-452-9595
safetyhotline@tdi.state.tx.us