

Lean and Mean, but Still Fifteen - Child Labor Laws Emphasize Safety

Here is the third installment in our five-part series on child labor laws. In this article, we discuss restrictions for 14 and 15-year old employees.

Q. I'd like to employ my neighbor's 15-year old daughter to perform general office duties and yard work at my business over the summer. How many hours can she work in a day or a week?

A. State and federal laws state that 14 and 15-year olds may not work more than 3 hours a day on school days, including Fridays. Minors of this age are also prohibited from working more than 18 hours per week in school weeks, more than 8 hours a day on non-school days, or more than 40 hours per week when school is not in session. In addition, they may not work before 7:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m., except from June 1 through Labor Day when they may work until 9:00 p.m. There are a few exceptions, such as if the minor is involved in a Work Experience and Career Exploration Program. (Visit our website for more information).

Q. In addition to the above-mentioned limitation on hours, are there restrictions on the *type* of work that 14 and 15-year olds can perform?

A. Yes. As discussed in last week's column, there are certain types of work that is off limits to ALL minors (older and younger alike). This includes:

- manufacturing and storing of explosives,
- driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor vehicle;
- coal mining,
- logging and sawmilling,
- power-driven woodworking machines,
- exposure to radioactive substances,
- power-driven hoisting apparatus,
- power-driven metal-forming, punching, and shearing machines,
- mining, other than coal mining,
- meat packing or processing (including the use of power-driven meat slicing machines),
- power-driven bakery machines,
- power-driven paper-product machines,
- manufacturing brick, tile, and related products,
- power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears,
- wrecking, demolition, and shipbreaking operations,
- roofing operations and all work on or about a roof, or
- excavation operations.

Q. May I employ my 14-year old son in one of the occupations listed above?

A. No. The law still prohibits you from employing him in any of these occupations. You are also prohibited from employing him in manufacturing, construction or mining operations. As with other employers, parents employing their own children must apply to BOLI's Child Labor Unit for an Annual Employment Certificate. Applications can be downloaded from our website.

Q. Back to my 15-year old neighbor: If I do not ask her to perform any work that is listed among the prohibited activities, may I employ her work in my gift shop, making sales and stocking shelves?

A. Yes. Minors of this age may work in a retail or service environment performing the following tasks:

- Bagging and carrying out customers' orders,
- Cashiering, selling, modeling, art work, advertising, window trimming, or comparative shopping,
- Cleaning fruits and vegetables,
- Clean-up work and grounds maintenance -- including the use of vacuums and floor waxers, but not power-driven mowers, cutters and trimmers,
- Cleaning cooking equipment, including the filtering, transporting and dispensing of oil and grease, but only when the surfaces of the equipment and liquids do not exceed 100° F,
- Delivery work by foot, bicycle, or public transportation;
- Kitchen work in preparing and serving food and drinks, but not cooking or baking,
- Office and clerical work,
- Pricing and tagging goods, assembling orders, packing, or shelving,
- Pumping gas, cleaning and polishing cars and trucks (but may not repair cars, use garage lifting racks, or work in pits),
- Wrapping, weighing, pricing, stocking any goods as long as they do not work where meat is being prepared and do not work in freezers or meat coolers.

For more information on this and other important issues affecting Oregon employers, please visit our website at www.oregon.gov/boli/ta. You can also call us at 971-673-0824.