

Do Not Mix Dangerous Work and Minors

Question: I'd like to hire my neighbor's 16-year-old daughter to drive for my delivery service. Her 17-year-old brother also needs a job, and there is an opening at my friend's sawmill. Can we go ahead and hire them?

Answer: No. Generally you would need to wait for candidate to turn 18 years old to fill either of these positions.

First, any person under 18 years old is considered a minor under state and federal wage laws. There are strict regulations as to how much and what kind of work minors can perform. For example, 16- and 17-year-olds can work any time of the day or night, but they may not work more than 44 hours in a week.

Second, remember, before you put any minor to work, you must first apply to the Bureau of Labor and Industries for an "Annual Employment Certificate." You can download an application for this form from the website.

Sixteen- and 17-year olds are limited in the kind of work they can perform. There are federal and state regulations that list all of the tasks that are considered too dangerous for these workers. This list is called, "Occupations Particularly Hazardous for the Employment of Minors between 16 and 18 Years of Age or Detrimental to Their Well-Being." It can be found on our website at www.oregon.gov/boli/whd/clu or the federal Department of Labor website at www.dol.gov.

Here are just a few of the "hazardous occupations" in which minors can not be employed:

Driving a motor vehicle on a public road. (There are some very limited exceptions for 17-year olds);

Working in logging and sawmill operations;

Operating power-driven, woodworking machines including machines used for cutting, shaping, forming, surfacing, nailing, stapling, wire stitching, fastening or assembling, pressing or printing of wood or veneer;

Operating power-driven, hoisting apparatuses or assisting in the operation of hoisting apparatuses. This includes elevators, cranes, derricks, hoists and forklifts;

Working as an operator or helper on power-driven, metal-forming, punching and shearing machines. They can, however, operate metal working machines such as lathes, planing-function machines, borers, grinding machines; drills, drill press reamers and honers);

Minors that are 14 or 15 years old are far more limited both in the kind of work they can perform and the hours they can work. For example, they cannot work during any hours when school is in session. In addition, they can't work over three hours a day during the school year, or eight hours a day during the summer.

These "younger" minors are also prohibited from working on almost all power-driven machinery, as well as in areas where power-driven machinery is used.

And please feel free to find more child labor information at our website at www.oregon.gov/boli/whd/clu. You can call the Child Labor staff at 971-673-0836 for specific questions on child labor matters.

For more information on this and other important issues affecting Oregon employers, including seminars conducted by BOLI's Technical Assistance Unit, visit our website at www.oregon.gov/boli/ta. You can also call us at 971-673-0824.