

Teenaged Summer Staffing

Part 2 of 2

Incomplete Records Are Subject to Fines

The Division of Labor Standards Enforcement and school authorities have the authority to audit minors' employment records. If an employer has not obtained and kept work permits, it may be interpreted as illegally employing minors. Employers may be fined \$500 for the first offense. Penalties increase with further offenses.



Besides keeping the standard records for adult employees, which includes itemized wage statements, employers are also required to keep records of all minors' names, ages, dates of birth and addresses.

Employers that are illegally employing minors are subject to significant penalties. One example is employing minors to work in hazardous occupations which could result in a fine of \$5,000 to \$10,000 per infraction. Employers are also subject to criminal prosecution with the possibility of up to six months of jail time for unlawful employment.

Educate Teen Employees about Their Rights and Workplace Expectations

Minors are protected by state labor, employment and civil rights laws, including safety laws as are adult workers. An employer can be liable for any violations of these laws. Young workers may not know about their rights regarding their employment and may not be cognizant of dangers in the workplace. For those reasons, thorough training and diligent supervision is crucial to their success in the workplace and the employer's compliance with employment and civil rights laws and good safety practices.

As you would with all employees, ensure that teen employees are educated on the employee handbook and company policies. Give the new worker a copy of your required harassment, discrimination and retaliation prevention policy. Get the signed acknowledgment that the individual received and read the policy.

Remind the teen worker to express observations about something that is not appropriate or any concerns.

Minors may not understand the workplace conduct that is expected. Relationships between employees and with supervisors is different than their experience in high school. Workplace behavior is different than high school behavior. Educate a minor

employee as to the standards and expectations that are expected as soon as they are hired.

Safety is a High Priority When Employing Teens

Employers are responsible for developing effective safety habits for all employees and in particular for new hires, such as teens. This becomes even more crucial when the statistics for teen worker injuries and deaths. A California Department of Industrial Relations sponsored website reports that every nine minutes, a teen is injured seriously enough to require a visit to the emergency room. And about 70 teen workers die every year from workplace injuries.

The importance of educating teen workers about safety cannot be stressed too strongly. Some tips from the [Labor Occupational Health Program](#) are helpful in this:

- Give minor workers explicit directions for every assignment and hands-on training for the safe and correct use of equipment. Don't assume that they have any basic knowledge beyond what they get from you.
- Watch minor workers as they work and give immediate feedback for errors and accomplishments.
- Advise teens to express any problem at all, including not understanding directions for an assignment.
- Train frontline supervisors of minor workers to observe them carefully and to set a good example.

Best Practices

- Ensure that the proposed position for a teen worker is a good match for their skills and temperament.
- Closely review the safety risks of the proposed position for the teen worker.
- Consider additional training on workplace policies or safety for teens and modifying the work schedule to meet a minors' unique needs.
- Carefully observe legal requirements and keep recording for employing minors.