A Guide for Maine Employers of Teens: Make Sure your Teen Worker is a Safeteen

Maine Department of Labor

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Maine Department of Labor
"How we prepare our youth for their own lives will be the measure of our success."
—Governor Angus King

Teenage workers bring enthusiasm, energy and unlimited potential to our organizations... but in order for them to reach their potential, it is essential that we, as employers, teach them how to be successful.

To ensure their success—and yours—it is vital that your teen workers are properly trained and educated about workplace safety. Because safety is not the chief concern of teen workers, strict rules have been developed to protect them. It is important that you know the rules...and that you make sure your teen workers know the rules as well.

The SafetyWorks! team at the Maine Department of Labor has developed the safeteen program to help you and your teen workers. In addition to our safeteen Employer Kit, we provide consultation and on-site training in workplace safety issues—at no charge to you. Call us at 1-877-SAFE-345 if you have any questions or require any assistance, or visit our website at http://www.safeteen.org. TTY: 1-800-794-1110 (for deaf and hearing impaired)

With your help, we can make working in Maine a success story for us all.

TEENS AT WORK—
A potentially risky business

The statistics are clear: young workers get hurt on the job every day. Sometimes, they get killed. In a typical year, 200,000 American teens suffer workplace injuries, of which nearly a third require emergency room treatment. 70 teen workers die each year. In Maine, workers under 18 were injured seriously enough to file 829 lost-time workers' compensation claims from 1993-99.

The vast majority of workplace injuries to teens (83%) happen within the first year on the job—and 25% of these in just the first month! Why? Because teens don't have the experience or training to do the job as safely as possible. So their risk of getting injured is high.
YOU'RE THE BOSS—

Teen worker safety is your responsibility. Here's what you can do!

1 **Know the Laws**
Understand and comply with state and federal child labor laws and occupational safety and health (OSHA) regulations. Child labor laws prohibit teens from working late or long hours and from performing certain hazardous tasks. OSHA regulations that apply to your business cover all employees, regardless of age.

2 **Make Sure Teens Under 16 Have Work Permits**
Before starting a new job, a Maine teen under 16 years old must obtain a work permit from the school department where he or she lives. They cannot start work until the Maine Department of Labor approves the permit. Teens under 16 must have a work permit even if they do not attend school. You must keep permits on site until the teen no longer works for you. Work permits are issued for a particular job and a particular employer; teens are only allowed to do the work for which the permit was issued.

3 **Identify and Eliminate Hazards**
Start by identifying potential hazards and reviewing past injuries. Simple redesign of work areas, tasks, procedures or equipment can often eliminate hazards without expensive changes. For free help identifying and controlling hazards, call SafetyWorks! at 1-877-SAFE-345. TTY: 1-800-294-1110.
4 **Provide Health and Safety Training**

Teens are different from adults physically, emotionally and in the way they think. Always take this into account when training your young workers. Give teens clear instructions for each task they must do. Provide safety training during orientation (hands-on whenever possible) and review specifics as teens begin to do each task. Make sure they know that doing a job right includes doing it safely.

- Review steps for proper lifting.
- Teach teens how to work safely with any chemical products they use.
- Explain what tasks they can and cannot do. Remember: child labor laws prohibit teens under 18 from doing many hazardous tasks and from using most power tools. Laws are especially restrictive for teens under 16.
- Demonstrate and explain correct use of tools and equipment.
- Train teens what to do in case of an emergency.
- Tell them who to report injuries and safety problems to.
- Teach teens how to use any required personal protective equipment.
- Encourage them to ask questions.

5 **Provide Effective Supervision**

Demand that supervisors and older employees set good examples by following safety rules. Make sure supervisors who give work assignments know the laws, including the hours teens can work and the jobs they can do. Have them observe teens working to see that they are doing tasks as trained. Create an atmosphere that encourages teens to speak up when there is a problem or instructions are unclear. Keep in mind that teens are reluctant to let others know when they don't understand something and are often injured trying to do more than they have been trained to do.

6 **Establish a Health and Safety Committee**

Set up a health and safety committee of managers and employees (both teens and adults) that meets regularly to identify hazards and address problems. Employees know their jobs and workplaces well and often have insightful ideas about injury prevention.

7 **Post Child Labor Laws**

All Maine employers must post the State Child Labor Laws poster. For a copy, call the Maine Department of Labor at 207-624-6400 (TTY: 1-800-794-1110) or download it from: [http://janus.state.me.us/labor/bls/childlbr.htm](http://janus.state.me.us/labor/bls/childlbr.htm)
How many HOURS can teens work? How EARLY and LATE can they work?

Employers must keep daily time records for minors (under 18). The records must show what time the minor began work, total hours worked, and what time the minor finished for the day. Following are the hours and times minors may work.

16-17 Years Old (enrolled in school, including home-school)

16 & 17 year olds can work:
Up to 4 hours on a school day; 8 hours on the last school day of the week
Up to 20 hours in any week with 3 or more school days
   Except: 8 hours each day with unscheduled school closure
   for a total of 28 hours that week (e.g., storm day, broken furnace, etc.)
Up to 50 hours each week with less than 3 scheduled school days,
   or during the first or last week of the school year
Up to 10 hours a day on weekends, holidays, vacations, teacher workshop days
No more than 6 days in a row

How early? How late?
Not before 7 a.m. on a school day
Not before 5 a.m. on a non-school day
Not after 10 p.m. the night before a school day
Until midnight if there is no school the next day
Minors under 17 cannot work during school hours
Under 16 (work permit required!)

Minors under 16 can work:
Up to 3 hours a day on school days, including Fridays
Up to 18 hours in any week with one or more school days
Up to 8 hours on days without school (during weekends, holidays, vacations, storm days, etc.)
Up to 40 hours in a week with no school days
Never more than 6 days in a row

How early? How late?
Between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.
Between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. during summer vacations only
Not during school hours

NOTE: There are some exceptions to the hours listed; call the Maine Department of Labor at 1-877-SAFE-345 for details. TTY: 1-800-794-1110 (for deaf and hearing impaired)
In Maine, no one under 18 years old may do work that involves:

* Driving a vehicle on a public road
* Driving a forklift
* Using meat slicers or power-driven bakery machines
* Serving or selling alcoholic beverages (17-year-olds can serve or sell liquor if supervised by someone 21 or older)
* Using a circular saw, band saw, guillotine shears, or a box crusher
* Using power-driven woodworking machines
* Working in wrecking, demolition, ship-breaking, or excavation
* Exposure to radioactive substances
* Using power-driven paper-products machines
* Using power-driven metal-forming, punching, or shearing machines
* Manufacturing brick, tile, or kindred products
* Manufacturing explosives or storing explosives
* Mining, logging, or sawmilling
* Using a power-driven hoisting apparatus
* Slaughtering, packing, or processing meat
* Most roofing or railway operations
* Working in foundries or around blast furnaces
* Manufacturing hazardous products such as phosphorus matches
* Working as a firefighter or engineer on a boat

* Working alone in a cash-based business
* Direct contact with pesticides
* Places having nude entertainment

* New prohibitions as of 2001

NOTE: These are not complete lists and there are some exceptions. Rules differ for farm work. The Maine Department of Labor can give you more information. Call toll-free 1-877-SAFE-345. TTY: 1-800-794-1110 (for deaf and hearing impaired)
NO ONE under 16 years old may do work that involves:

- Any work in a manufacturing facility (e.g. factory)*
- Operating any power-driven machinery (except machines in offices, retail stores, and food service, and gasoline pumps)
- Cooking (except at soda fountains, lunch counters, snack bars, or cafeteria serving counters) or baking
- Working in freezers or meat coolers
- Working in construction, transportation, communications, or public utilities
- Working in warehouses (except clerical)
- Loading or unloading trucks, railroad cars, or conveyors
- Working on ladders or scaffolds
- Washing windows in a public or commercial building if the window sill is more than 10 feet above the ground
- Laundering in a commercial laundry or dry cleaning establishment
- Working in a pool room, billiard room, or bowling alley
- Working as a public messenger or chamber maid
- Any processing operations (as in meat, fish, or poultry processing or cracking nuts)*
- Working in a hotel or motel (except 15-year-olds can work in the office, lobby, kitchen, or dining room)
- Any mining
- Working around boilers or in engine rooms
- Doing industrial homework
- Handling, serving or selling alcoholic beverages (15-year-olds can handle liquor—stocking and carrying, for example—but not serve or sell it)
- Any of the occupations prohibited for all minors under the age of 18
- Any work that the Maine Department of Labor determines to be dangerous to the health and well-being of minors

*Except in office, retail, or customer service/sales areas, in a separate room away from manufacturing or processing operations, or outside in non-hazardous work on the grounds.

Persons under 14 may not work in most businesses.
There are a few exception to this, e.g. as news carriers, on farms, and in entertainment.
GOOD THINKING!

Many employers have come up with innovative ways to encourage teen worker safety. Here are a few of the ideas that have proved successful:

• Post signs that say "STOP: You must be 18 to operate or clean this equipment" on equipment minors cannot use, available from SafetyWorks!

• Use the curriculum Starting Safely: Teaching Youth about Workplace Safety & Health available from SafetyWorks!

• Issue employees under 18 different colored uniforms so supervisors can easily tell if they are performing unauthorized tasks.

• Assign each new teen worker a buddy or mentor, who answers questions, helps give hands-on training and offers safety tips.

• Develop a computerized scheduling program to ensure that teens under age 16 aren't scheduled for too many hours during school weeks.

• Have young workers act out specific health and safety problems and then come up with solutions.
RESOURCES

For questions about wage or child labor laws, contact:

Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards, Wage and Hour Division:
207-624-6410 • TTY 1-800-794-1110 • http://janus.state.me.us/labor/blsmain.htm

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division:
207-780-3344 or 207-945-0330 • http://www.dol.gov

For questions about workplace health and safety, contact:

SafetyWorks!, Maine Department of Labor:
207-624-6400 or 1-877-SAFE-345 • TTY 1-800-794-1110 • http://janus.state.me.us/labor/blsmain.htm

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Young Workers Safety and Health Network

Please note: This brochure gives brief information about the laws and is not intended as a substitute for the laws themselves or for changes in laws, policy, interpretations or rules. Contact the Maine Department of Labor at 207-624-6400; TTY: 1-800-794-1110 (for deaf and hearing impaired) for copies of the Maine child labor laws and formal interpretations.

The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Telephone: (207) 524-6400; TTY: 1-800-794-1110; e-mail: webmaster_bls@state.me.us