



North Carolina Working Teens: Protect Yourself and Know Your Rights!

Did you know that 70 teens die from work injuries in the United States every year? Hundreds more are hospitalized, and tens of thousands require treatment in hospital emergency rooms.



- *A young groundskeeper was electrocuted while standing on an aluminum ladder holding a pole saw trimming trees.*
- *Andy works in a pizza shop. The dough got stuck in the machine one day. Andy tried to push it through with his hand but his hand got caught between the two rubber rollers, crushing two fingers on his left hand.*
- *Jaime is an aide in a hospital where she cleans cooking pans using a powerful chemical solution. One day, Jaime lifted three large pans out of the chemical solution, and the pans slipped out of her hands and back into the solution which splashed all over the side of her face and into her right eye. She was blinded in that eye for two weeks.*

Know the possible hazards at work to prevent injuries.

Types of Work

Examples of Some Types of Hazards

Restaurants/ Fast food/ Bakeries	Working alone, working at night, assault, hot cooking equipment, slippery floors, cleaning chemicals, slicing machines, grease, dough mixers.
Retail stores/ Grocery stores:	Working alone, working at night, assault, heavy lifting, box crushers, certain types of equipment (e.g. slicers, dough mixers, paper balers).
Janitorial/ Maintenance work:	working alone, hazardous chemicals, heavy lifting, slippery floors, blood on discarded needles, electricity
Landscaping/ Home Repair	Working alone, operating heavy machinery, electricity, heavy lifting, constant loud noise
Construction site	Working alone, working at heights, working in trenches, working with heavy equipment, contact with power tools or electricity, lifting heavy objects, slipping.
Driving and delivery	Traffic crashes, heavy lifting, assault.
Agriculture	Using heavy equipment, working in grain bins, working at heights, working with large animals, driving trucks, using power devices, sunburn, lifting.



Why do teens get hurt on the job?

- Asked to do dangerous jobs or use dangerous equipment
- Inadequate training
- Poor supervision
- Unsafe equipment
- Working too many hours/fatigue
- Working alone
- Unsafe work environment

What are my rights on the job?

You have the right to:

- ❑ Be in a safe workplace
- ❑ Refuse to work if you feel unsafe
- ❑ Speak up! (see contact information below)
- ❑ Work the hours and the jobs deemed safe by the law
- ❑ Use safety equipment
- ❑ Get safety training
- ❑ Receive at least minimum wage

- Ask for payment for medical care (workers' compensation) if you get injured or sick because of your job.
- Work without racial or sexual harassment

Is it OK to Do Any Kind of Work?

No! There are laws that protect teens from doing dangerous work. In North Carolina workers under 18 may not work in most jobs involving:

- Explosives
- Mining
- Logging
- Many power-driven machines
- Operating a motor vehicle
- Outside helper on motor vehicles
- Working with radioactive materials
- Meat packaging
- Manufacturing brick or tile
- Working with power saws
- Demolition
- Roofing
- Welding, brazing, and torch cutting
- Excavation
- Exposure to lead, benzene, asbestos, or silicon dioxide
- Work on machinery in canneries or seafood or poultry processing plants
- Ladders or scaffold above 10 feet
- Electrician work
- Any work in confined spaces
- Occupations requiring the use respirators
- Preparing, serving or selling alcoholic beverages

In addition, workers 14 or 15 years old may not work in jobs involving:

- ❑ Warehousing and storage
- ❑ Work involving the use of ladders and scaffolding (platform and its supporting structure used for supporting employees, materials or both)
- ❑ Use, repair, or cleaning of any power driven machines other than office machines
- ❑ Operation of motor vehicles
- ❑ Cooking and baking
- ❑ Machine repair/ maintenance
- ❑ Loading/ unloading goods
- ❑ Work in freezers and meat coolers
- ❑ Work in or around boiler/engine rooms
- ❑ Construction

What if I am under 14?

There are even stricter laws to protect your health and safety.

For more information on which jobs teenagers can legally perform, check out www.nclabor.com/wh/fact%20sheets/joint_state_federal.htm for more information.

Do I Need a Work Permit?

YES! If you are under 18 and plan to work, you must get a work permit. The Youth Employment Certificate (work permit) can be obtained on-line at www.nclabor.com/wh/youth_instructions.htm. You can also find the form at your county department of social services. If you have problems, call 1-800-NC-LABOR

What Hours Can I Work?

	Ages 14 and 15	Ages 16 and 17
Work hours	Between 7 am & 7 pm during the school year, but not during school hours.	Anytime, except not between 11 pm and 5 am when there is school the next day.

	Between 7 am & 9 pm from June 1 through Labor Day. Must be given at least a 30 minute break after 5 consecutive hours of work	*If there is a need to work during the non-permissible hours, you must receive written approval from your parents/guardian and from your principal
Maximum hours when school is in session	Up to 18 hours a week, but not over: 3 hours a day on school days 8 hours a day on non-school days	
Maximum hours when school is <i>not</i> in session	40 hours a week 8 hours a day	

What are my safety responsibilities on the job?

- Follow safety rules and practices for your job
- Use safety equipment and protective clothing when required or as needed
- Ask questions!
- Tell your supervisor or parent if you feel unsafe or know of safety hazards at work
- Be aware of your environment
- Know your state and federal child labor laws
- Help other workers know their rights and be safe

What are my employer's safety responsibilities?

- Provide a safe work environment
- Provide me with adequate training
- Provide me with adequate supervision
- Provide me with breaks, as required
- Provide me necessary safety equipment

- Provide medical attention if I get hurt
- Help me with my safety concerns

What if I get hurt on the job?

1. Tell your supervisor right away. Tell your parents or guardians too.
2. Get emergency medical treatment if needed.
3. Your employer must give you a claim form. The claim form can also be found at <http://www.comp.state.nc.us/ncic/pages/form18.pdf> . You can also call the North Carolina Industrial Commission at 1-800-688-8349.

Workers' Compensation: Did you know?

- ❑ You can receive benefits even if you are under 18 and even if you are a temporary or part-time worker
- ❑ You receive full benefits no matter who was at fault for your job injury
- ❑ You do not have to be a legal resident of the U.S. to receive workers' compensation benefits
- ❑ You cannot sue your employer for a job injury, in most cases
- ❑ It is illegal for your employer to fire or punish you for reporting a workplace problem or injury, for claiming workers' compensation.

What if I need help with a safety problem?

Can I be fired if I report a safety problem?

What should I do if I am asked to work more hours than are allowed under the law?

What should I do if I am asked to work "off the clock"?

What should I do if I think my employer is violating safety regulations?

Talk to your supervisor

Talk to your parents or teachers

Contact any of the following organizations:

Important contact information!

Questions on Legal Work for Teens and Wage or Work Problems

North Carolina Wage and Hour Bureau

<http://www.nclabor.com/wh/wh.htm>

1-800-NC-LABOR

General Workplace Safety Problems

North Carolina OSHA (Occupational Safety and Hazard Association)

<http://www.nclabor.com/osa/osh.htm>

1-800-NC-LABOR

Workers' Compensation Information and Assistance

North Carolina Industrial Commission

<http://www.comp.state.nc.us/> (look on "Hot List")

1-800-688-8349

Sexual Harassment or Discrimination Assistance

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

<http://youth.eeoc.gov/>

1-800-669-4000

North Carolina Employment Discrimination Bureau

<http://www.nclabor.com/edb/edb.htm>

1-800-NC-LABOR

North Carolina Department of Social Services

www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/local

1-800-662-7030

Other Helpful Websites:

Teen Workers

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html>

Youth 2 Work

<http://www.youth2work.gov/index.htm>

(has a link to Youth Rules)

Youth Rules!

<http://www.youthrules.dol.gov/>

Agricultural jobs and work on family farms

<http://www.dol.gov/>

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/agriculture/index.html>