

Texas Workforce Press Release

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Youth in Texas Can Benefit From Summer Employment

Employers, Youth and Parents Should Adhere to Accompanying Laws

AUSTIN — Summer greets Texas teens each year with a diverse range of opportunities to earn extra money through part-time and full-time employment. Equally important, though, is for youth, their parents and prospective employers to be aware of state and federal laws impacting child-labor issues.

In addition to those already seeking employment, statistics from recent years show an average of 100,000 additional job seekers entering the labor market in Texas searching for work between the months of April and June. Teenagers eager to earn their first paychecks or acquire valuable vocational experience represent a significant number of job seekers who contribute to the state's labor force during that time.

"Opportunities for youth to enter the workforce peak every summer, as seasonal hiring builds," said Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chair Diane Rath. "We encourage our state's youth to pursue the many benefits of summer employment. We want all parties involved, however, to be knowledgeable about important guidelines to ensure that their experience will be a safe one."

Any person under the age of 18 is considered a child when employed in the workplace. Potentially detrimental occupational settings or working conditions that could interfere with a child's safety, health or well-being are reduced through both state and federal child-labor laws.

Different laws apply to different age groups. For example, workers who are age 16 or 17 can engage in any task for any number of hours as long as it is not deemed hazardous by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Children 14 or 15 may perform a job beyond school hours in some nonmanufacturing, nonmining, nonhazardous jobs, but only under certain conditions.

Laws restrict teens who are age 14 and 15 from working more than three hours on any given school day or more than 18 hours within a school week. They also may not work more than eight hours on a nonschool day or more than the standard 40 hours during a week when school is out. A standard workday for children who are 14 or 15 must be between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., except between June 1 and Labor Day, when they can work no later than 9 p.m.

Commissioner Representing Employers Ron Lehman echoes the importance of adhering to child-labor regulations.

"Our state's young workers are able to benefit from a positive experience because of exemplary efforts by employers to promote healthy working conditions," Lehman said. "Employers become exceptional role models by ensuring a trouble-free experience while helping them build character in safe and productive work environments."

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Job-related functions prohibited by law and considered inappropriate or unsafe for teens include:

- Driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor vehicle (absolutely prohibited for youth under 17; subject to certain conditions for youth age 17)
- Roofing operations
- Excavating operations
- Power-driven wood-working machines
- Power-driven bakery machines
- Power-driven paper-products machines
- Power-driven hoisting equipment
- Power-driven metal-forming, punching and shearing machines
- Power-driven circular saws, band saws and guillotine shears
- Meat-packing or processing machines (including power-driven meat slicing)
- Manufacturing brick, tile and related products
- Wrecking, demolition and ship-breaking operations
- Logging and sawmilling
- Exposure to radioactive substances and ionizing radiation
- Manufacturing or storing explosives

A few exemptions for apprentices and student learner programs under specified standards for some hazardous occupations do exist. For more information, visit <http://youthrules.dol.gov/jobs.htm>.

“Summer employment is often the first exposure to the workforce for many of these young people, and can be a preview to professions that teens may pursue as they enter adulthood,” said Commissioner Representing Labor Ronny Congleton. “Summer work is an ideal way for them to build vocational skills, earn money and develop a sense of pride because of what they contribute to the labor force.”

Teens seeking job-search assistance can visit their local workforce center. Visit <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/dirs/wdas/wdamap.html> for information about local workforce centers.

For other information on prohibited jobs or those with restrictions, employers or prospective summer youth workers can learn more about child labor laws by calling TWC’s Labor Law Department at (800) 832-9243 or (512) 837-9559, or online by visiting <http://www.dol.gov/esa/welcome.html>. More details are available online at www.texasworkforce.org (employer or worker services) or by calling DOL at (866) 487-2365.

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