



**FORWARD-THINKING**

# TEEN WORKER SAFETY



## **Young workers have high rates of job-related injuries. According to the CDC:**

- A lack of experience and safety training can contribute to high injury rates.
- Young workers may not have the strength needed for certain duties.
- In 2018, the injury rate for workers between the ages of 15 and 19 was 2.2 times higher than the injury rate for workers aged 25 and older.

## **Follow child labor laws. According to the DOL:**

- Children between the ages of 14 and 15 cannot work in hazardous occupations or perform hazardous duties. For example, these workers cannot perform baking operations, operate power-driven machinery (except office machines) or work from ladders, scaffolds or their substitutes. Their hours are also highly restricted.
- Children between the ages of 16 and 17 are prohibited from using many types of machinery. This includes power-driven bakery machines, meat-processing machines and hoisting apparatus.
- These workers are also prohibited from cleaning power-driven meat processing machines, including meat slicers and grinders.

## **Provide a mentor.**

- The CDC recommends using a mentoring or buddy system with an adult or experienced peer who can provide guidance.
- You shouldn't assume that teen workers already know things that seem obvious to you. Teens need training and supervision.
- Don't assume teens will ask questions. Teen workers may avoid asking questions because they're embarrassed or uncomfortable.

## **Foster a culture of safety.**

- Teens are learning about workplace safety. If they see unsafe behavior, this is what they will learn.
- Everyone should practice strong safety procedures, including lockout/tagout procedures, use of personal protective equipment when appropriate and safe lifting techniques.

## **Cover key safety issues.**

- Provide personal protective equipment when necessary and train teens on correct usage.
- Give teens instructions on what to do if there is an emergency or injury.
- Show teens how to lift safely to avoid injury.
- Point out potential hazards, such as cleaning materials and sharp objects, and provide training on safe handling.
- For older teens who are allowed to use power-driven machines, make sure they know and follow safe procedures.
- Roughhousing can lead to injuries. Make it clear that roughhousing is not permitted.

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