

## Are you planning to hire a young worker?

Young workers starting their first jobs provide a great opportunity for you to help them develop safe lifelong work habits. Those first weeks on the job are when you need to be especially vigilant. In Oregon, 10 percent of all serious workplace injuries occur during a worker's first 30 days on the job. And more than 100 young workers are injured on the job each year.

Work on a construction site is especially hazardous. For example, the U.S. construction industry — which employs less than three percent of all young workers — ranks third in work-related fatalities among young workers. Top causes of fatalities are falls from roofs, being crushed by construction equipment operated by someone



else, and receiving electric shocks from equipment installation or tool use. Essential to ensuring that young workers develop safe work habits is making sure they receive appropriate training before they begin work and supervision as they learn new skills.

### Advice for employers

Oregon and federal laws regulate employment of minors (anyone under 18 years old); there are strict limitations on the number of hours minors can work and the types of work they can do. Oregon employers who hire minors must also obtain an annual employment certificate from the Child Labor Unit of the Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI). A minor must be at least 14 years old to work for an employer in Oregon; however, in rare circumstances, the Oregon Wage and Hour Commission may allow younger individuals to work.

## Laws to know

*The Fair Labor Standards Act* establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, record keeping, and child labor standards for the private sector, federal, state, and local governments.

Youths under 16 may perform only office or sales work in the construction industry. Federal rules also limit the number of hours and times of day that they may be employed. Youths 16-17 may work in the construction industry and on construction sites, with the exception of the hazardous jobs below:

- Occupations involving the use of explosives
- Driving motor vehicles
- Mining occupations
- Logging and saw milling occupations
- Power-driven-woodworking-machine occupations
- Work involving exposure to radioactive substances
- Power-driven hoisting-apparatus occupations such as elevators, cranes, and derricks
- Power-driven metal-working-machine occupations such as metal forming, punching, and shearing
- Slaughtering or meat-processing occupations
- Power-driven-bakery-machine occupations
- Power-driven-paper-products-machine occupations
- Brick and tile manufacturing occupations
- Occupations that involve operating power saws and shears
- Wrecking, demolition and shipbreaking (dismantling) occupations
- Roofing work
- Excavation work
- Messenger service occupations

Sixteen- and 17-year-olds may work up to 44 hours a week. Fourteen- and 15-year-olds may work 18 hours a week during the school year and 40 hours a week when school is not in session.



The Oregon Safe Employment Act requires employers to provide their employees with safe and healthful workplaces and comply with workplace safety and health requirements. The act authorizes Oregon OSHA to enforce the state's workplace safety and health requirements.

# Getting started with young workers

- Know the federal and Oregon rules that apply to employing young workers and comply.
- Do a workplace-hazard survey, eliminate the hazards, and ensure employees' jobs are as safe as possible.



- Tell young workers that they have the right to file a claim to cover their medical benefits and some of their lost work time if they are injured while working.
- Tell young workers about the jobs that they can and can't do. Consider labeling hazardous equipment to tell young workers they are not allowed to operate it.
- Require that young workers do only jobs for which they've been trained.

- Make sure young workers receive clear instructions for each job that they do. Encourage them to ask questions about tasks or procedures that they don't understand.
- Recognize that language may be a barrier for young workers who are not fluent in English. Have young workers demonstrate what they have learned as part of their training.
- Provide appropriate and properly sized personal protective equipment to young workers, such as steel-toed shoes and hardhats.
- Provide adequate supervision and emphasize workplace safety. Encourage supervisors to set good examples for safe work habits.

- Start a mentoring or buddy system for young workers. Have an experienced older employee be a buddy to answer questions and help the young worker learn the new job.
- Develop a policy to ensure a drug-free workplace. Research indicates that adolescents who work longer hours may be more at risk for alcohol and drug abuse. Programs that educate employees about drug issues help improve workplace safety and health and send a clear message to young workers: They must be drug-free to work.



## Advice for young workers

**Prevent cuts and lacerations.** If you're using a knife, cut away from your body. Get first aid immediately if you cut yourself. Any surface where blood has spilled should be properly cleaned to protect you and others from bloodborne diseases.

**Protect your eyes.** Your employer must provide eye protection for you whenever you're exposed to eye injuries during your work. Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes from chemical splashes or flying debris. If you use chemicals, make sure you know their hazards and how to handle them properly. Your employer must also train you to use eye protection properly.

**Protect your ears.** Wear hearing protectors such as foam earplugs or earmuffs when you work in a noisy environment or use loud equipment. If you have to shout when you talk to a coworker standing next to you, the noise at your workplace may be hurting your ears.

**Dress appropriately.** Consider where you'll be working and the job you'll be doing. Protect your feet from falling objects, lawn mower blades, hot grease, and chemical spills. If you're working near machinery that has moving or rotating parts, don't wear loose clothing or dangling jewelry that can be caught. Restrain long hair.

**Beat the heat.** The combination of high temperatures, humidity, and physical labor can make you ill or even kill you. The two most serious forms of heat-related illnesses are heat exhaustion (primarily from dehydration) and heat stroke, which can be fatal.



Signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke need immediate attention. Recognizing the warning signs and taking quick action can prevent death. Wear cool, comfortable, breathable clothing in hot environments. Wear a hat and use sunscreen when you work outdoors. Drink plenty of fluids; don't wait until you are thirsty.

**Prevent slips, trips, and falls.** The floors where you work should be clean and free of spills, oil, and debris; signs should warn others of wet or slippery areas. Electrical cords and other objects should not cross a walkway. If you use a ladder, make sure it is stable and secure; never stand on the top step.

**Be cautious with machines and equipment.** Don't use machines unless they're properly guarded; never reach inside moving machinery. Do not wear gloves or loose clothing while using machines with high-speed moving parts, such as drill presses. And never use electrical equipment when you're standing on a wet surface.

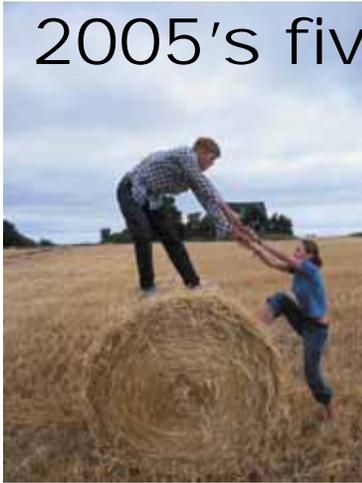
**Don't enter confined spaces.** Most confined spaces are tanks, pits, or tightly enclosed crawlspaces, but there are many others. Confined spaces have many hazards: toxic gasses, lack of oxygen, and dangerous equipment among them. Certain types of confined spaces are permit-required confined spaces; they should have the sign: "DANGER. PERMIT-REQUIRED CONFINED SPACE. AUTHORIZED ENTRANTS ONLY."

**Lift loads properly.** Get close to the load. Bend your knees, keep your feet slightly spread for balance and stability. Keep your head, shoulders, and hips in a straight line as you lift. If you need to turn, don't twist; turn your entire body, including your feet. Know how much weight you can safely lift. Get help lifting, if necessary.

**Know how to respond to emergencies.** A first-aid kit should be available in the work area. Do not respond to accidents unless you are trained in first aid. Report any injury to your supervisor. Know who is the designated emergency responder in your work area and where the emergency exits are.

**Report unsafe conditions.** Report unsafe conditions or equipment to your supervisor.

# 2005's five worst teen jobs



The National Consumer's League, [www.nclnet.org](http://www.nclnet.org), annually compiles the five worst teen jobs using government statistics and reports, results from the Child Labor Coalition's survey of state labor departments, and news accounts of injuries and deaths.

1. **Agriculture fieldwork and processing.** Although most accidents happen to youths that live and work on family farms, a significant number happen to those hired as farm workers.
2. **Construction and working at heights.** Falls from ladders, scaffolds, and roofs result in significant numbers of workplace fatalities and injuries among workers of all ages, including those under age 18.
3. **Landscaping, groundskeeping, and lawn services.** These jobs often involve working with pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals. Fatalities are few, yet young workers may be injured by tools and equipment that laws prohibit them from using.
4. **Forklifts, tractors, and ATVs. Forklifts.** Although most deaths associated with forklifts involve driving, many forklift-related deaths result from being struck by, run over, or falling from the vehicle. Tractors. Although tractor accidents are the most common agricultural fatality in the U.S., tractors are increasingly used in non-agricultural industries, such as construction, manufacturing, and landscaping. ATVs. Increasingly, ATVs are being used in both agricultural and non-agricultural settings. Tractors and ATVs are rollover risks for drivers and passengers.
5. **Traveling youth crews.** Each year, thousands of 16-to-24-year-olds join traveling sales crews that move rapidly around the country. Sellers are dropped off in residential neighborhoods to peddle their wares, mostly magazine subscriptions or household cleaning agents. Door-to-door sales is dangerous work due to increased risk of motor vehicle injury – as either pedestrian or passenger – and vulnerability to assault and abduction.

## How young workers get hurt



1

- *They attempt jobs for which they're not trained*
- *They don't have appropriate supervision*
- *They work with dangerous tools or equipment*
- *They try to work too quickly*
- *They use alcohol or other drugs on the job*



2



3

Unsafe practices (clockwise, from left to right): 1) Unsafe elevated working surface; 2) horseplay, lack of supervision; 3) Lack of fall protection.



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For general information, technical answers or information about Oregon OSHA services, please call (503) 378-3272 or toll-free within Oregon, (800) 922-2689.

**Did you know?** R&H Construction and Yorke & Curtis General Contractors are the first two Oregon construction companies to graduate from the Oregon OSHA's *Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program* (SHARP). For more information about SHARP, contact Oregon OSHA Consultative Services, (503) 378-3272 toll free in Oregon, (800) 922-2689 or send e-mail to [consult.web@state.or.us](mailto:consult.web@state.or.us).

OR-OSHA 440-3351 (7/05)

For a color version of *Construction Depot* and related occupational-safety-and-health information, visit the OR-OSHA Web site, [www.oshha.org](http://www.oshha.org).

*This issue of the **Construction Depot** focuses on workplace safety for young workers. Oregon provides plenty of summer job opportunities for young workers. High school and college students search for summer employment and recent graduates begin looking for permanent, full-time jobs. Agriculture, construction, food manufacturing, and hospitality are some of Oregon's seasonal industries and they add tens of thousands of workers during the summer and early fall. **In this issue:** ■ Are you planning to hire a young worker? ■ Laws to know ■ Getting started with young workers ■ Advice for young workers ■ 2005's five worst teen jobs*



**NO OPERATORS UNDER  
18 YEARS OF AGE**



The Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor has stickers such as this one that you can put on hazardous equipment to warn employees under 18 not to operate it. The stickers may be printed directly from its YouthRules! Website, [www.youthrules.dol.gov](http://www.youthrules.dol.gov). *Use of the stickers is voluntary.*