

TOP FIVE WORST TEEN JOBS

(Source: National Consumers League)

Every year 200,000 young workers under the age of 18 are injured on the job and more than 70 are killed. Many teenagers are working in unsafe conditions or are not receiving the training they need to stay safe on the job. Others are being paid under the table by employers who aren't necessarily following government regulations about working hours, conditions, or training. Teens and their parents are encouraged to discuss the type of work, the training provided, the hours they'll spend on the job, and the level of supervision. No amount of money is worth an injury or death on the job.

Teenagers should be wary of these five types of jobs:

1) Delivery and Other Driving

Driving is the leading cause of occupational injury and death for workers of all ages, according to NCL. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of occupational deaths among 16- and 17-year-old workers, said NCL. Federal law prohibits driving as an occupation for minors under age 17. Seventeen-year-olds may engage in "incidental and occasional" driving which is interpreted as a maximum of one third of the work time in any work day and no more than 20 percent of the work time in any work week, said the group. Delivery jobs and service calls that require driving to customers' homes are prohibited.

2) Cash-Based Businesses

Working alone in cash-based businesses and late at night is another bad job for teens, the group said. Such jobs that include heavy contact with the public; the presence or exchange of cash; an unsecured environment; late-night hours, make teens highly vulnerable, it said. According to NIOSH, homicide consistently remains a top cause of occupational injury deaths for workers under the age of 18.

3) Traveling Youth Crews

"On-the-streets" work is dangerous due to increased risk of motor vehicle injury and vulnerability to assaults and abductions, says NCL. Moreover, workers are often not adequately compensated. "Children as young as 10 years old are illegally recruited to sell candy, magazine subscriptions, and other consumer items in neighborhoods or on street corners after dark, under dangerous conditions, and unaccompanied and unsupervised by adults," says the group. According to NCL, street selling and door-to-door selling is not permitted for minors under age 14. Some states set lower or higher age limits for this employment. These businesses are for profit companies, despite their claims of being nonprofit programs for young people.

4) Cooking

Exposure to hot oil and grease, hot water and steam, and hot cooking surfaces can also be a major hazard. In 1994, NIOSH cited as especially dangerous the contact burns association with the cooking process, servicing the cooking equipment, and working in the general areas of cooking appliances. Federal law permits limited cooking for 14- and 15-year olds. Minors 16 and older may operate and clean grills and deep fryers. Minors under age 18 are not allowed to operate, clean, or repair commercial ovens, meat grinders, or slicing machines.

5) Construction & Work at Heights

Most fatalities among construction workers are the result of falls, says the group. For instance, in a six-month period in 1992, NIOSH reported 832 minors were treated in emergency rooms for injuries sustained in construction work. Construction work is prohibited under federal law for those who are under 16 years of age and roofing, excavation, and demolition are prohibited for workers under age 18, according to NCL. However, young people may learn the construction trade in a safe environment through a school-sponsored apprenticeship or student learner programs, the group said.