



# Youth at work: Understanding Minnesota's youth employment laws

Labor Standards Division  
Wednesday, May 6, 2026

# Labor and Industry business areas

- Apprenticeship Minnesota
- Construction Codes and Licensing Division
- Labor Standards
- Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance
- MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation
- Projects and planning
- Workers' Compensation Division



# Labor standards enforced by DLI

- Minnesota Fair Labor Standards Act
- Women's Economic Security Act
- Earned Sick and Safe Time Act
- Child Labor Standards Act
- Minnesota Prevailing Wage Act
- Wage Theft Prevention Act
- Other laws related to employment, wages, conditions, hours.



# Think about it

How many lakes does Minnesota have?

# This presentation addresses Minnesota labor law as of May 6, 2026



Today's session will focus only on Minnesota law. This information is for general guidance and is not legal advice.



There may be other laws, such as federal laws, that impact employees and employers, which we will not address in this session.



When there are multiple laws in effect, employers must follow all applicable laws.



## Child Labor

The federal child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) were enacted to ensure that when young people work, the work is safe and does not jeopardize their health, well-being or educational opportunities. These provisions also provide limited exemptions.

## Quick Links

- [Child Labor Fact Sheets](#)
- [Order Free Publications](#)
- [Questions? Contact Us.](#)

## Most Requested



### Dangerous Jobs

Find out what jobs and tasks are off-limits for anyone under 18 years of age.

[Learn More](#)

### YouthRules.gov #WorkersRights

### YouthRules.gov

Learn how young workers can have safe and rewarding work experiences.

[Learn More](#)

### State Laws

Get information on the child labor laws in each state.

[Learn More](#)

# Minnesota Child Labor Standards Act

The purpose of sections 181A.01 to 181A.12 is to aid in the economic, social and educational development of young people through employment. Work is an integral factor in providing a sense of purpose, direction, and self-esteem necessary to the overall physical and mental health of an individual. Young people, especially those who have completed high school or occupational training, should not be denied employment opportunities. Work, however, must be coordinated with schooling and safety considerations in order to serve the best interest of the young.

# Think about it #1

At what age can a worker generally start working in the state of Minnesota?

# The “three paths” of Minnesota youth labor standards

Question	Minor < 14 years of age	Minor < 16 years of age	Minor < 18 years of age
<b>Can the minor work?</b>	Generally not able to work except by exemption or by permit.	Generally able to work at 14 years of age.	Generally able to work at 14 years of age.
<b>Are there occupations that the minor may not engage in?</b>	Generally not able to work except by exemption or permit, then subject to all hazardous restrictions.	Subject to all hazardous occupations restrictions—unless an exemption is met.	Subject to hazardous occupations restrictions for minors under the age of 18 unless exemption is met.
<b>What hours can the minor work?</b>	Generally not able to work except by exemption or permit, then subject to hours restriction for minors under 16.	Between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. only, maximum of eight hours in 24-hour period and 40 hours in a week. Employment during school hours requires employment certificate.	High school students cannot work after 11 p.m. on as school night or before 5 a.m. on school day, except can work until 11:30 p.m. and at 4:30 a.m. with written parental permission.
<b>Can the minor work during school hours?</b>	If working during school hours, must obtain employment certificate —unless an exemption is met.	If working during school hours, must obtain employment certificate — unless an exemption is met.	No limitation on working during school hours.

# Statute and rule-based exceptions

- Minors working for a family farm corporation where the minor's parent is a member of the family farm corporation (5200.0930, subp. 4 - hazardous)
- Minors working for corporations owned by one or both parents, where the daily corporate business is supervised by the parent(s) (5200.0930, subp. 4 and 181A.07, subd. 4 – hazardous, age, and hours)
- Performer /newspaper carrier/youth athletic referees (181A.07 – age)
- home chores/babysitting (181A.07 - age, hours)
- Tasks outside the area of hazard (5200.0930, subp. 2 – hazardous)
- High school graduates who are 17 years of age (5200.0930, subp 3 – hazardous)

# Special concern: The presence of liquor

- Generally, minors under the age of 18 cannot work in rooms or areas where liquor is consumed or served, or in tasks prohibited by law that involve the sale, service, dispensation, or handling of liquor.
- Minors who have reached the age of 16 can be employed:
  - As a Busser, Dishwasher, and Host in rooms/areas of a restaurant, hotel, motel, or resort where the presence of intoxicating liquor or 3.2 malt liquor is incidental to food service or preparation;
  - As a Busser, Dishwasher, Host, or Server in rooms/areas where the presence of 3.2 percent malt liquor is incidental to food service or preparation;
  - To provide musical entertainment in those rooms/areas where the presence of intoxicating liquor and 3.2 percent malt liquor is incidental to food service or preparation; and
  - In occupations not prohibited by law in rooms or areas where no liquor is consumed or served.

# Think about it #2

Is it legal for a 17-year-old worker to operate a forklift?

# Hazardous employment activities

Examples (subject to limitation in the rule or exemption):

- Under 18 (Minnesota Rules 5200.0910):
  - In or about **construction or building projects**;
  - logging or lumbering operations, paper mills, sawmills;
  - to **operate or assist in the operation of power-driven machinery** (this includes snow blowers and other power-driven lawn and garden equipment);
  - **to drive certain motor vehicles; or to work in rooms or areas where certain alcohol is served or consumed**;
  - or in any tasks involving the serving, dispensing or handling of alcohol that are consumed on premises.



# Hazardous employment activities, continued

- Under 16 (Minn. R. 5200.0920):
  - to lift, carry, or personally care for patients in hospitals or nursing homes;
  - **to operate or assist in the operation of machinery including farm type tractors and other self-propelled vehicles;**
  - **in walk-in meat freezers or meat coolers;**
  - or in any occupation in agriculture that the U.S. secretary of labor finds to be hazardous for minors under the age of 16; and
  - any prohibited activity listed under Minn. R. 5200.0910.



# Retaliation

## **181A.12 Subd. 5. Retaliation**

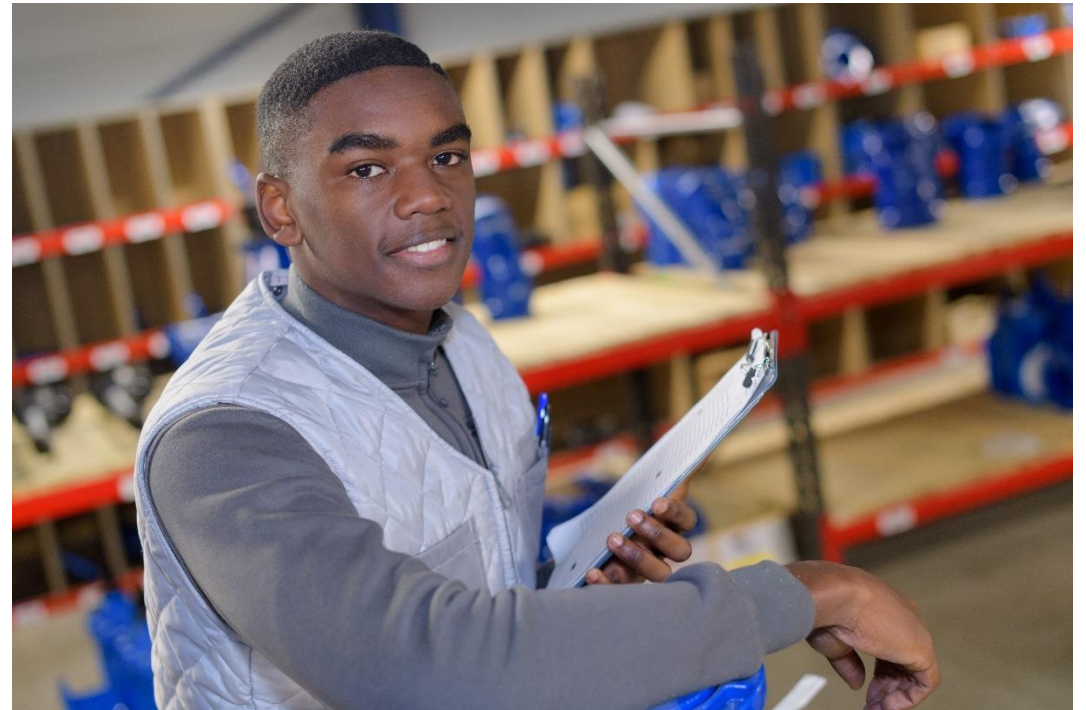
An employer shall not discharge, discipline, penalize, interfere with, threaten, restrain, coerce, or otherwise retaliate or discriminate against an employee for asserting rights or remedies under sections 181A.01 to 181A.12 or any rules promulgated under section 181A.09. This includes but is not limited to filing a complaint with the department, informing the employer of the employee's intention to file a complaint, or participating in an investigation by the department. In addition to any other remedies provided by law, the commissioner may order an employer found in violation of this subdivision to provide back pay, compensatory damages, reinstatement, and any other appropriate relief to the aggrieved employee.

# Think about it #3

When would a child labor exemption permit be issued for a minor to work outside the hours normally allowed by MN law?

# DLI child labor exemption permits

- DLI receives applications for child labor exemption permits
  - Must be filed by the minor's parent, guardian, school official, or youth employment specialist.
  - Assessed on a case-by-case basis, granted if the permit would be in the best interest of the minor.
  - Permits can be sought and may be granted for any of the child labor laws and rules.
  - Turnaround time varies by season.
  - Permits are available as fillable PDFs at to [mn.gov/business/employment-practices/child-labor-exemptions](https://mn.gov/business/employment-practices/child-labor-exemptions) and can be submitted to [cl.permit.dli@state.mn.us](mailto:cl.permit.dli@state.mn.us).



# Employment certificates: 181A.05

Any minor 14 or 15 years of age who wishes to work on school days during school hours shall first secure an employment certificate. The certificate shall be issued only by the school district superintendent, the superintendent's agent, or some other person designated by the Board of Education. The employment certificate shall be issued only for a specific position with a designated employer and shall be issued only in the following circumstances:

1. if a minor is to be employed in an occupation not prohibited by rules promulgated under section 181A.09 and as evidence thereof presents a signed statement from the prospective employer; and
2. if the parent or guardian of the minor consents to the employment; and
3. if the issuing officer believes the minor is physically capable of handling the job in question and further believes the best interests of the minor will be served by permitting the minor to work.

**Note:** An employment certificate does not create an exception for hours restrictions under federal law.

# Approved training program exceptions

## Apprenticeship or Youth Skills Training (YST)

Apprenticeship: Need high school diploma and legal authorization to work in the U.S.

### YST:

- Industries include advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, health care and information technology.
- A Child labor exception permit is required if employment involves a hazardous occupation.
- If the program has been approved, the employer will be required to submit proof of workers' compensation coverage and information about specific machines, tools and equipment that may be used; meet with Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation about equipment and related safety measures.

# Approved training program exceptions, continued

Other training program approved by Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the board of trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities or the board of regents of the University of Minnesota.

- A Child labor exception permit is required if employment involves a hazardous occupation.

# State law: Minimum wage

Effective Jan. 1, 2026, the state's minimum-wage rates for all employers, including large employers, small employers, youth and J-1 visa wages for hotels, motels and lodging establishments, increased to \$11.41 an hour. The law still allows for a 90-day training wage for workers under age 20, which increased to \$9.31.

Provision	Amount as of Jan 1. 2026
State minimum wage	\$11.41 an hour
90-day training wage (under 20 years of age)	\$9.31 an hour

# Earned sick and safe time

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry website. The page title is "EARNED SICK AND SAFE TIME". The navigation bar includes "DIRECTIONS", "CONTACT US", "CHECK A LICENSE", "GET A PERMIT", "RENEW A LICENSE", and "MAKE A PAYMENT". The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: "For business > Employment practices > Earned sick and safe time". Below this is a large image collage with three photos: a family outdoors, a woman wearing a face mask, and a doctor examining a child. The text below the image states: "Effective Jan. 1, 2024, Minnesota's earned sick and safe time law requires employers to provide paid leave to employees who work in the state. Minnesota's current sick and safe leave law remains in effect until Dec. 31, 2023 and will be replaced by the new earned sick and safe time law on Jan. 1, 2024." A link to "View FAQs about earned sick and safe time." is provided. The page also includes a sidebar with navigation links such as "APPRENTICESHIP AND DUAL TRAINING", "CODES AND LAWS", "CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION", "ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS", "ELEVATOR CONTRACTORS", and "EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES". At the bottom, there are buttons for "EMAIL US" and "CALL US", and a link for "MINNESOTA PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE".

**m** DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY

DIRECTIONS CONTACT US CHECK A LICENSE GET A PERMIT RENEW A LICENSE MAKE A PAYMENT

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS FOR WORKERS

Select Language Powered by Google Translate

For business > Employment practices > Earned sick and safe time

## EARNED SICK AND SAFE TIME

Effective Jan. 1, 2024, Minnesota's earned sick and safe time law requires employers to provide paid leave to employees who work in the state. [Minnesota's current sick and safe leave law](#) remains in effect until Dec. 31, 2023 and will be replaced by the new earned sick and safe time law on Jan. 1, 2024.

- [View FAQs about earned sick and safe time.](#)

### What is sick and safe time?

Sick and safe time is paid leave employers must provide to employees in Minnesota that can be used for certain reasons, including when an employee is sick, to care for a sick family member or to seek assistance if an employee or their family member has experienced domestic abuse.

### Who is eligible for sick and safe time?

EMAIL US CALL US

MINNESOTA PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

APPRENTICESHIP AND DUAL TRAINING

CODES AND LAWS

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

ELEVATOR CONTRACTORS

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Age, hours restrictions

Brochures and fact sheets about labor standards

Child labor laws

Contact Labor Standards

Earned sick and safe time

FAQs: Earned sick and safe time (ESST)

Employment termination

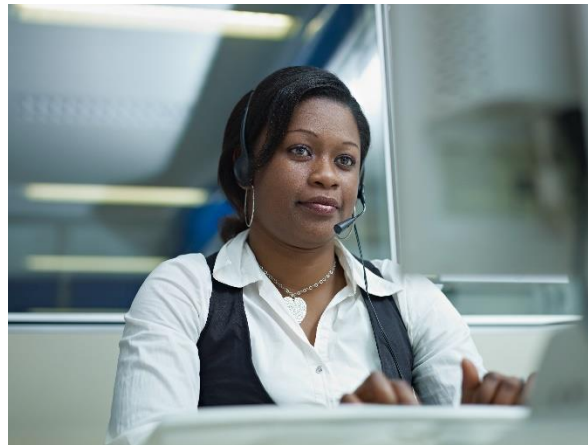
# Tipping



- Tips are the property of the employee directly serving the customer. Employers cannot require employees to share or pool their tips with other employees, except under certain limited-service situations.
- Gratuities presented to a direct service employee by credit card shall be credited to that pay period in which they are received.
- As of Aug. 1, 2024, employees must receive the full amount of tips paid by card or e-payment. Gratuities received through credit cards or other types of electronic payments must be paid to the employee in the next pay period.

# Employee notice

- Employers are required to keep a copy of the notice signed by each employee.
- Employers are also required to provide employees in writing any changes to the information in the notice before the date the changes take effect.



# Employee notice, continued



## Employee notice

1. Employee:		Address:	
Phone number:		Email address:	
Date employment began:			
2. Legal name of employer:		Main office/principal place of business address:	
Phone number:		Email address:	
Operating name of employer (if different):			
Mailing address (if different):			
3. Employment status (exempt or non-exempt):			
<input type="checkbox"/> Employee is exempt from: <input type="checkbox"/> minimum wage <input type="checkbox"/> overtime <input type="checkbox"/> other provisions of Minnesota Statutes 177			
Legal basis for exemption:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Employee is non-exempt (entitled to overtime, minimum wage, other protections under Minn. Stat. 177)			
4. Rate or rates of pay			
Paid by: Hour <input type="checkbox"/> Shift <input type="checkbox"/> Day <input type="checkbox"/> Week <input type="checkbox"/> Salary <input type="checkbox"/> Piece <input type="checkbox"/> Commission <input type="checkbox"/> Other method <input type="checkbox"/>			

# Resources

- **Labor Standards:** [dli.mn.gov/laborlaw](https://dli.mn.gov/laborlaw)
- **Child and youth labor landing page:** [dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/child-labor-laws](https://dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/child-labor-laws)
  - Age restrictions, exemption permits, FAQs, hours of work, penalties, prohibited work, proof of age, teen worker fact sheet
- **Informational videos in four languages:** [dli.mn.gov/labor-standards-videos](https://dli.mn.gov/labor-standards-videos)

# Learn more

- Stay up to date with the Labor Standards by signing up for the “Wage and Hour Bulletin.”
- To sign up, visit [dli.mn.gov/bulletin](https://dli.mn.gov/bulletin) or scan the QR code.
- Contact Labor Standards at 651-284-5075 or [dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us).



Wage and Hour Bulletin



# Thank you for your participation

Scan the QR code or visit the [Microsoft Forms page](#) to submit the survey form.



# Upcoming webinars



**May 12:** Employment law basics for small business in Minnesota



**May 20:** Fundamentos de las leyes laborales para pequeñas empresas en Minnesota



To register, visit [dli.mn.gov/events](https://dli.mn.gov/events).

# Thank you

Contact Labor Standards at 651-284-5075 or [dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us).