



Working while learning What to know about youth employment during the school year

Minnesota Department of Labor and
Industry and the U.S. Department of
Labor

Labor standards, wage and hour agencies in Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Labor Standards

- dli.mn.gov
- 651-284-5075

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division

- dol.gov/whd
- 612-370-3341

Minnesota Attorney General's Office

- ag.state.mn.us
- 651-296-3353

St. Paul, Labor Standards Enforcement and Education Division

- <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/human-rights-equal-economic-opportunity/labor-standards-enforcement-and-education>
- 651-266-8900

Minneapolis, Labor Standards Enforcement Division

- <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/civil-rights/labor-standards-enforcement/>
- 612-673-3012

Labor and Industry business areas

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



Labor Standards Division

- Ensures workers are paid fairly, enforce workplace rights and help prevent employment law violations.
- Provide guidance on wage and hour issues, including [earned sick and safe time](#), [child labor](#), [overtime](#), [pregnancy and parental rights](#), [retaliation](#), [worker misclassification](#) and [more](#).



Think about it

How many lakes does Minnesota have?



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
Can the minor work?	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.
Are there occupations that the minor may not engage in?	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.
What hours can the minor work?	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.
Can the minor work during school hours?	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

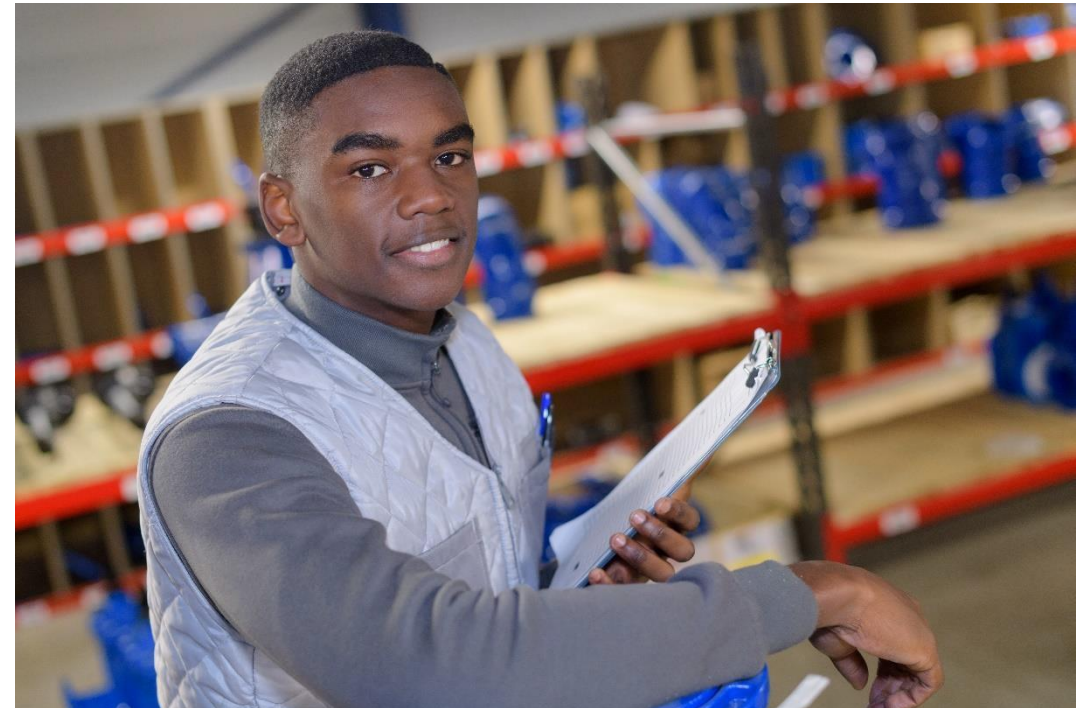
An employer shall not discharge, discipline, penalize, interfere with, threaten, restrain, coerce, or otherwise retaliate or discriminate against an employee for asserting rights or remedies under sections 181A.01 to 181A.12 or any rules promulgated under section 181A.09. This includes but is not limited 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 and can be submitted to 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.



CHILD LABOR LAWS

What jobs and hours
can teens work?



Think about it #4

- When do child Labor regulations no longer apply to a worker?

By the numbers

- Federal Minimum Wage = \$7.25/hour (state laws may have higher minimum)
- Tipped Employees = at least \$2.13/hour + tips must equal **\$7.25/hour for first 40 hours** (state laws may vary)
- Overtime = 1.5 x the regular hourly rate after 40 hours worked
- Paycheck deductions may not bring your wages below minimum wage or overtime pay (e.g., uniforms, unpaid customer bills)
- Most job training must be paid





DANGEROUS JOBS

Some jobs are prohibited for teenagers under 18.
What are they?



Danger! - Prohibited for teens under 18

- Explosives
- Exposure to radioactive materials
- Mining (incl. coal)
- Forestry
- Woodworking machines
- Saws
- Driving
- Meat & poultry packing/processing
- Bakery machines
- Paper processing machines
- Manufacturing of bricks & tiles
- Demolition
- Roofing
- Excavation
- Metal working & shearing
- Operation of power-driven hoists



AGE LIMITS

What non-agricultural jobs can you
do when you're under 18?



14–15 years old



Pay

- Federal minimum wage
- Wages + tips = at least min wage



Time Limitations

- Not allowed before 7 a.m. (always)
- **Labor Day – June 1**: not after 7 p.m.
- **June 1 – Labor Day**: not after 9 p.m.
- 3 hrs/day on school days, incl. Fridays
- 18 hrs/week when school is in session (regardless of month)
- 8 hrs/day max on non-school days
- 40 hrs/week max during non-school weeks



Allowable

- Some food service jobs
- Most retail jobs
- Office & cleaning jobs
- Creative work, like singing
- Camp counselor, tutoring, or teaching jobs
- Lifeguarding (15-year-olds only)

16 –17 years old



Pay

- Federal minimum wage
- Wages + tips = at least min wage
- Overtime



Time Limitations

- No limits



Allowable

- Everything **but** the dangerous jobs



AGRICULTURE JOBS

Jobs in agriculture are different.



What's the difference?

14 or 15 years old

- You **may work** in specific non-hazardous jobs on farms **outside school hours**

16 years or older

- You **may work** in any **farm job** at any time

Note: You may work on your **parents' farm** at **any age** doing any job at any time*





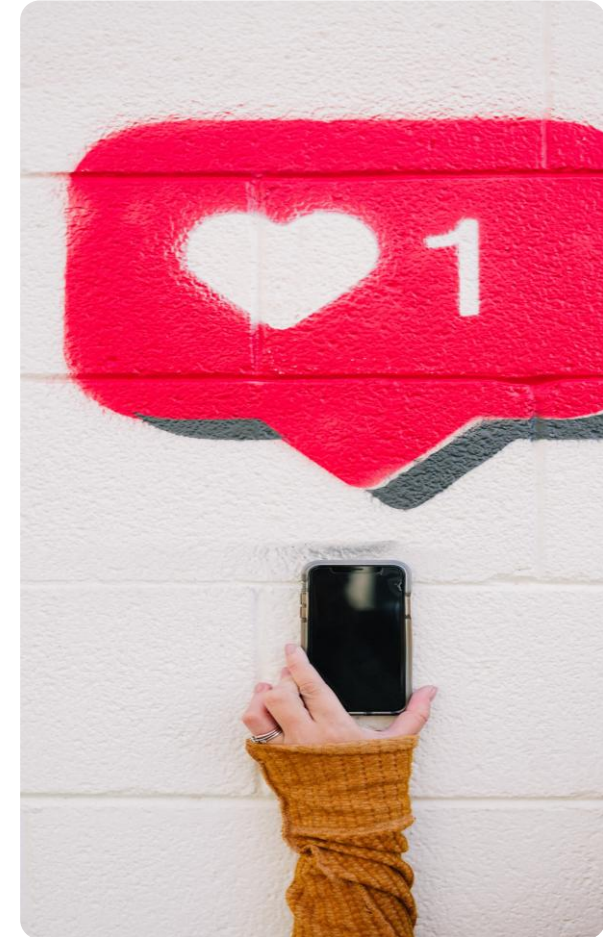
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Know the rules - and your rights.



Know what to do

- **Know your rights** and what you legally can do
- **Politely say “no”** when asked to do something illegal or unsafe
- **Be aware** of your surroundings
- **Write down details** of anything that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable to have a record
- **Be an advocate**, support each other; report any concerns to a trusted adult or contact us
- [You can file a complaint](#) with DOL- it's free and confidential



Where to find us



Social Media



[LinkedIn.com/showcase/dolwhd](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/dolwhd)

[Facebook.com/departmentoflabor](https://www.facebook.com/departmentoflabor)

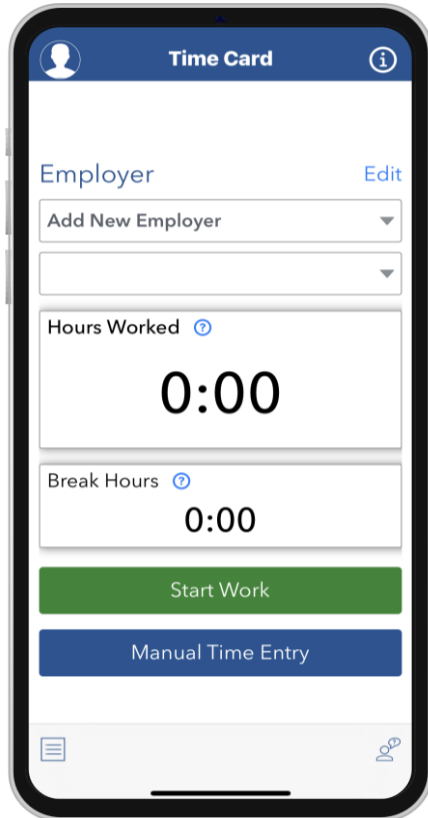
[@USDOL](https://www.instagram.com/USDOL)

[@USDOL](https://www.youtube.com/@USDOL)

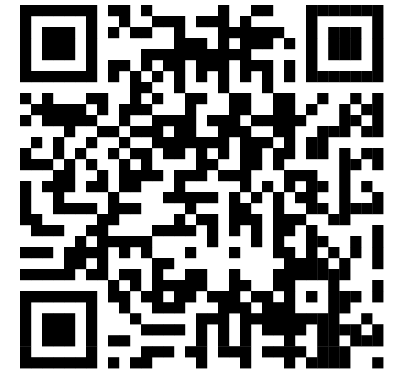
[@WHD_DOL](https://twitter.com/WHD_DOL)



Track your own work hours



DOL-Timesheet App (free)



Workplace Rights Week



Workplace Rights Week is Minnesota's annual campaign to inform workers and employers about workplace rights, protections and responsibilities.

[Workplace Rights Week](#) runs from **Sept. 13-19, 2026**

If you already have events scheduled during these dates, please coordinate or align them with Workplace Rights Week



Workplace Rights Week 2025

- 422 participants in 6 webinars
 - OSHA and RDA
 - Apprenticeship
 - Workers' Compensation
 - Labor Standards
- First ever Spanish language webinar
- First ever Facebook Live
- 1470 business visits



2026 Workplace Rights Week Events

- **Monday, September 14th**
4pm: Worker Rights and Responsibilities Webinar
- **Thursday, September 17th**
2pm: Conozca sus derechos laborales: Lo que toda persona trabajadora debe saber
- **Tuesday, September 22nd**
11am: Guia esencial de la ley laboral para pequenos negocios en Minnesota
- **Wednesday, September 23rd**
3pm: Know your workplace rights
- **Thursday, September 24th**
2:30pm: Employment law basics for small businesses in Minnesota



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 or scan the QR code.
- Contact Labor Standards at 651-284-5075 or dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us.



Wage and Hour Bulletin



Thank you for your participation

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



Thank you

Contact Labor Standards at:

651-284-5075

dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us

dli.mn.gov