

Workin' Hard for the Money: How To Stay Safe as a Working Teen



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Anna, 17, was working in a fast-food restaurant when hot grease splattered from an uncovered, portable grease-filtering machine. She suffered second- and third-degree burns on her shoulder, back, chest, and arm. As a result of the burns, Anna had to undergo skin grafts and suffered permanent nerve damage.

Don't let this happen to you.

Every year, millions of teens work in part-time or summer jobs. Early work experiences can be rewarding for young workers - providing great opportunities to learn important job skills. When starting that first job, it's important that teens be aware of how to stay safe and healthy.

In 2008, 34 youth under 18 died from work-related injuries. In 2007, an estimated 48,600 work-related injuries and illnesses among youth 15 to 17 years of age were treated in hospital emergency departments.

What Hazards Should Teens Watch For?

Type of Work	Examples of Hazards
Janitor/Clean-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toxic chemicals in cleaning products Blood on discarded needles
Food service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slippery floors Hot cooking equipment Sharp objects
Retail/Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violent crimes Heavy lifting
Office/Clerical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress Harassment Poor computer work station design

What are teen responsibilities on the job?

- Follow all safety rules and instructions
- Use safety equipment and protective clothing when needed
- Look out for co-workers
- Keep work areas clean and neat
- Know what to do in an emergency
- Report any health and safety hazard to your supervisor

What are teen rights?

- Work in a safe and healthful workplace
- Safety and health training
- Federal minimum wage of \$7.25, and lower wages when workers receive tips from customers (Call Department of Labor for minimum wages in your state)
- Report safety problems to Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- Workers' compensation for a work-related injury or illness
- Work without racial or sexual harassment
- Refuse to work if the job is dangerous to your life or health
- Join or organize a union
- Know the laws for your state:

<http://youthrules.dol.gov/states.htm>

You have a *right* to speak up!

It is illegal for your employer to fire or punish you for reporting a workplace problem.

What If I Need Help?

- Talk to your boss about the problem.
- Talk to your parents or teachers.

For more information on working safe, visit the Department of Labor web site at <http://www.dol.gov>

To make a health or safety complaint, visit Occupational Safety and Health Administration at www.osha.gov

To make a complain about sexual harassment or discrimination, visit Equal Employment Opportunities Commission at www.eeoc.gov

For more information on Young Worker Safety and Health, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth/>