

Teen Safety: Tips for Supervisors

A publication by Oklahoma Department of Labor partners

Teen Safety Starts With Good Supervision

While many employers go through a routine orientation, the job of providing on-the-job safety training often falls to the supervisor. If it's your job to provide teens with safety training and supervision, you need to know what your responsibilities are and how to effectively communicate with your workers, especially teens.

Teenagers often start jobs with little or no education about workplace safety and health. No matter what your industry, you need to make young workers aware of some important general information: 1) all jobs have hazards, 2) on-the-job injuries can be prevented, 3) there are laws to protect teen workers, 4) teens need to know the laws and speak up about their concerns.

You need to provide specific training for all new employees about the hazards and safety procedures at your workplace. Be sure to cover how to report any hazards they find, or how to report an injury or illness if they do become hurt at work. Supervisors also need to make sure teens know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Why bother going through an orientation process especially with young workers who may leave after a short period of time? Many reasons. The results of a recent study showed that teens who said they "loved their jobs" were most likely to agree with the statement, "I received a thorough orientation when I first joined the company." Research also shows that employees who love their jobs provide better customer service and perform better, and are less likely to get hurt.

Teens differ from adults in maturity, the way they

learn and their physical characteristics. Tailor the training your supervisors provide to the teenage worker. Always provide "hands on" training. It helps them learn not only the task, but the safety requirements of the task.

Make the training fun! Do it in periodic short sessions, rather than one long class. Include activities and opportunities for the teens to interact. Encourage them to ask questions during the training and whenever they are unsure about how to do a job safely.



One of the biggest complaints among workers is poor communication in the workplace. Success depends on relating well to other people no matter what your position. This skill never goes away. This is true for entry-level teenage workers as well as those at the top of their organization. Work to ensure

open communication between yourself and the employees you supervise. Encourage them to ask questions, and don't rush to judgement about things they say. Be open to new ideas and always provide positive feedback. Make any criticisms constructive, giving the worker information they can use to improve their performance. Emphasize that doing a job right means doing it safely.

You may have to spend more time working side by side with a teen worker than you might with someone more experienced. Teens have a greater risk for injury and need more supervision.

Don't assume teen workers know everything. While something may seem like common sense to you, it may not be to someone with less experience.

Knowing how teens differ from adults in their attitudes and perceptions will allow you to create an atmosphere that will motivate all employees to higher levels of perfor-

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What you should know about Teen Safety:

Page 1 – Teen Safety Starts With Good Supervision ... the impact of supervision

Page 2 – Seven Tips for Supervisors ... guidelines for ensuring teen safety

Page 3 – Resources for Teen Safety ... Federal and state agency contact info

Page 3 – Understanding Child Labor Laws ... prohibited occupations for teens





Employer's Requirements

As the employer, you are required to:

1. Meet your general duty responsibilities to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards;
2. Keep workers informed about OSHA and safety & health matters with which they are involved;
3. Comply, in a reasonable manner, with standards, rules and regulations issued under the OSH Act;
4. Be familiar with mandatory OSHA Standards;
5. Make copies of standards available to employees, upon request;
6. Evaluate workplace conditions;
7. Minimize or eliminate potential hazards;
8. Provide employees safe, properly maintained tools and equipment, including personal protective equipment, and ensure they use it.



Employer's Rights

As an employer, you have rights under the OSH Act. Among those are the right to:

1. Seek free advice and on-site consultation and be involved in job safety & health through industry associations;
2. Request and receive proper identification of OSHA compliance officers, including having an opening and closing conference with the compliance officer and accompany them on the inspection;
3. File a notice of contest to dispute inspection results and request an informal settlement agreement process after an inspection.
4. Submit information or comments to OSHA on new regulations.
5. Submit a written request to NIOSH for information.

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Supervisors need to know the important motivators that teens say will cause them to give extra effort and make a commitment to stay with their employer.

You need training too! Many times a supervisor is promoted to that position because of their natural leadership abilities, but without training to foster those skills, supervisors may not be successful in their roles.

Supervisors must be trained to develop their leadership skills and improve their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. It is also vital for you to know and understand the child labor laws on the state and federal level. That way, you can ensure employees are not assigned to jobs that are prohibited, and that they are properly scheduled, so they don't exceed permissible work hours, or work too many hours. Talk to *your supervisor* about what kind of training you feel you need. Teens are the only class of workers afforded a break under the

labor laws, and you'll need to know these laws to ensure the employee's rights are protected, as well as their health.

It is possible to build an organization that succeeds, at least for awhile, without developing effective leaders. But the companies that outperform their competition in the long run are ones that invest the time, money, and energy to develop effective and exceptional leaders. Exceptional leadership is the cornerstone of a strong business foundation.

As we move up through the organization, it's easy to forget what it's like to be one of the youngest workers in the organization. However, new employees can bring the energy of their youth to a workplace and promote that excitement in others. With good supervision, proper training and the right attitude, the supervisor may set the tone for the employee's entire working life.

Preventing injuries and illness will ensure the worker has a long and happy life and a prosperous career, wherever life takes them.



Seven Tips For Safe Teen Supervision

Know the laws – understand and comply with state and federal child labor laws and OSHA regulations.

Make sure teens under 16 have work permits – before starting a job, an Oklahoma teen must obtain a work permit from their school or school administration office.

Identify and eliminate hazards – Conduct regular walk-through inspections to find hazards. Document these inspections and ensure any hazards found are promptly corrected.

Provide and obtain effective safety and health training – A well trained supervisor is the first step. Safety and leadership training ensure you're prepared to provide training for the employees you supervise. Resources for training include the Oklahoma Safety Council or your local Career Tech Center. Train employees initially and then periodically.

Provide effective supervision and set a good example – If employees see you taking short cuts, this is the example they are most likely to follow.

Develop and implement a comprehensive safety and health program – Include the four elements of an effective safety and health management system, including: management commitment, employee involvement, hazard identification and effective training. You can get assistance from the **Safety Pays**® OSHA Consultation Division for free.

Post the child labor laws – the state's child labor law poster is available on line at www.labor.ok.gov.



No job is worth a child's life!

The Oklahoma State Department of Labor, Federal OSHA and the Oklahoma Safety Council recognize the importance of establishing a collaborative relationship to foster an awareness of safety and health among young workers in Oklahoma. This publication has been developed in cooperation with our partners to promote teen safety in the workplace.

Our partners on the Internet:



Learn more about workplace safety at OSHA's Teen Worker webpage – www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/



Learn more about workplace safety at Oklahoma Safety Council's webpage – www.oksafety.org



Information on child labor laws in Oklahoma are available on the "publications page" at ODOL's website – www.labor.ok.gov

Understanding Oklahoma's Child Labor Laws

14

Fourteen (14) years of age is the minimum age for work.

Work Permits

Issued by the school, 14 and 15 year-olds are required to get a work permit from their school before they begin work.

Hours of Work 14 and 15 year-olds may work:

From the Tuesday after Labor Day to May 31st

- ◆ 3 hours on a school day
- ◆ 8 hours on a non-school day;
- ◆ 18 hours in a school week
- ◆ between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

From June 1st to Labor Day

- ◆ 8 hours on a non-school day;
- ◆ 40 hours in a non-school week
- ◆ between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Break Periods

- ◆ 30 minutes for every 5 hours worked
- ◆ 1 hour for every 8 hours worked.

All minors (under the age of 16) are prohibited from working in the following occupations:

- Construction
- Cooking or baking
- Fryers or grills
- Hoisting devices
- Ladders or scaffolds
- Lawn mower or weed eater (*other than working for self*)
- Loading and unloading
- Manufacturing, mining or processing
- Motor vehicles or service as helpers on vehicles
- Power-driven machines or equipment
- Public messenger service
- Public utilities and communications
- Slicers and sharp knives
- Transportation of persons or property by rail, highway, air, water, pipeline or other means
- Warehousing or storage, and
- Any other occupation declared particularly hazardous by federal law, federal regulations or the Commissioner of Labor.

Jobs Teenagers Can Do Include: office and clerical work, cashiering, selling, modeling, artwork, work in advertising departments, window trimming and comparative shopping, pricing or tagging (by hand or machine), assembling orders, packing and shelving, bagging and carrying out customers orders, errands and delivery work **by foot, bicycle and public transportation only**, kitchen work, dispensing gasoline and oil, courtesy service on premises of gasoline service station, car cleaning, washing and polishing, cleaning fruits, vegetables and stocking goods, when performed in areas physically separate from areas where meat is prepared for sale and outside freezers or meat coolers.

Note: Federal Regulations may vary from state regulations. Go to www.youthrules.dol.gov for additional information on federal regulations.